

Magazine

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The British Museum

Revolutionary philosophy

The transformative power of Tantra

Icy worlds

Life in the most northerly places on earth



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Painting of the
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We aim to ensure that information about
exhibitions outside the British Museum
is correct, but readers are advised to
check with venues before visiting.

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04



Clarissa Farr.

Tradition and modernity

This spring sees the opening of two fascinating exhibitions that explore ancient traditions and ways of life, and how they have evolved over the centuries. *Tantra: enlightenment to revolution* will take us to the heart of a radical philosophy that developed in India in the 6th century and went on to have a powerful global impact, influencing revolutionary and political thought. The emphasis Tantra has always placed on feminine power, social inclusivity and spiritual freedom naturally made it attractive to counter-cultural movements of the 20th century and enhances its appeal to today's audiences.

The Citi exhibition *Arctic: culture and climate* will be a major exhibition on the history of the Arctic and its Indigenous Peoples. Its central theme is a contemporary issue that is widely debated – the impact of climate change on the people who live in this northerly part of the world, which stretches over eight countries including Canada, Greenland and Russia. This dramatic and dynamic region has been home to resilient communities for nearly 30,000 years, and Indigenous Peoples have long used their creativity and

resourcefulness to maintain a respectful relationship with nature. The many different cultural groups of the Arctic have traded and collaborated with each other for millennia. In their spirit of sharing we have invited curators and artists from the region to work with us so that visitors can look at the circumpolar region through their eyes, seeing how their communities have adapted to climate variability in the past and how they view and address the future.

I am also glad that we are sharing our ground-breaking research outside the walls of the Museum. *Ancient Iraq: new discoveries* presents the latest finds made by teams led by British Museum archaeologists working in Iraq in an important touring exhibition that is travelling to Newcastle and Nottingham. I hope visitors will find inspiration, challenge and enjoyment in all these exhibitions, speaking as they do to some of the most fundamental issues of our times.

Clarissa Farr

Chair, British Museum Friends Advisory Council

With thanks to our contributors

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Neil Wilkin
Curator: Early Europe

George Shaw
Pan's People 3,
 2015–16.
 Charcoal on paper
 56 x 76 cm.

Buried lives

The unearthed remains of a man who died two millennia ago have long intrigued

George Shaw



For just over half a century I have been haunted by the English soil, or rather what the English soil slowly gives up or keeps to itself. It is this sense of the unearthed evidence of lives lived and un-lived, shifting and wriggling its way into and out of the present tense that roots and nourishes any imagination I may have.

Have I ever really found anything worth finding? The odd fiver maybe. I once found an ammonite lying on top of dirt and leaves. It looked just left there, or most likely lost or thrown out. Soon after we moved into our house the back garden became a graveyard to hamsters, a tortoise, a guinea pig and two cats. Over the years the back garden gave up other corpses: bits of Lego, plastic soldiers, parts of dolls, building blocks, marbles, spent fireworks and furry bits of skin that turned out to be tennis balls.

When I saw Lindow Man for the first time in the mid-eighties or thereabouts he looked familiar. I'd seen this thoroughly disgruntled face somewhere before. Was he someone I was at school with, someone who went missing and appeared on posters at bus stops or in shop windows? A dodgy *Crimewatch* reconstruction? Maybe he used to be big in films or TV and just faded out of

familiarity. He could be any of Francis Bacon's distorted and dismembered 20th-century casualties that look convincingly like art history dragged off the walls and left to rot away in the ground. Looking at him again I see a soldier of the Somme sinking into mud. He could be the insides of a Dalek or even those torn-up and trashed fragments of flesh from the pages of *Knave* and *Penthouse* that poked out of soil and tree roots in my local woods and are now returning to leaf mould. He's the found 'little child lost'. Or perhaps he's simply Christ's unresurrected body, the buried evidence that there is no hereafter, only a muddy grave and a hole in the back of your head. And given his age he could well be those feet that walked on England's green and pleasant land. If he had any feet.

Lindow Man is what I've made up, what I've dug up and what I should bury. I feel sorry for him. If being murdered and left in a bog for 2000 years isn't bad enough he's now buried in a glass box for people to gawp at or ignore. Is that how any of us would like to see our ending? Looking at him now I remind myself that he was a living man, not a metaphor or an exhibit.

And yet he still manages to hold onto his humanity because he holds onto his secrets. No amount of science or archaeology can take that away from him. To me he remains as strange and mysterious as Avebury, Borley Rectory or whoever left the porn in the woods. He remains human. And I remain haunted.



Romano-British man who died sometime between 2 BC and AD 119, found in Lindow Moss bog.

More treasures unearthed

Many new treasures were unveiled when the latest report on the Portable Antiquities Scheme was presented at the Museum on 17 March. Among them were a 1100-year-old silver and niello brooch, unearthed in Norfolk after a tipper truck delivered spoil to a new location. The brooch is of a rare type for this period, and is intricately decorated with plants and animals in the lively 'Trewiddle' style. It was so well preserved it was initially thought to be Victorian. Another find is a well-used Iron Age drinking set, including a 2000-year-old bucket adorned with mythical creatures and an unusual humanoid face. Further finds of note include a Roman Britain coin minted with an earlier coin die, making it a uncommon hybrid from a period when Britain broke away from Europe, and a solid gold Bronze Age arm ring, the type of which is so scarce we are unable to determine whether it is British or Irish in origin.

Michael Lewis
Head of Portable Antiquities
and Treasure



Silver and niello brooch, 9th century.

Recovered sculpture

The Surkh Kotal bull, 2nd century AD.



This fine sculpture was stolen from the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul in the 1990s, and was considered lost forever until it was offered for sale last November by an online auction house in this country. It was promptly reported by the Art Loss Register to the Metropolitan Police Service (Art and Antiques Unit) and disclaimed by its owner. Its provenance and stolen status was confirmed by the British Museum and the National Museum of Afghanistan, which has kindly agreed that this important sculpture be placed on public display prior to its return to

Kabul. This object was excavated at the important Kushan site of Surkh Kotal. It probably originally came from the inner part of the sanctuary of a temple which dates to the 2nd century AD, when this region of Afghanistan was part of the Kushan empire which stretched as far as northern India. The sculpture is on show at the head of the East Stairs (Room 53) until 24 April.

St John Simpson
Curator: Middle East

Conserving the colonnade

Visitors to the Museum this spring will notice that the front of the building is covered in scaffolding while we undertake conservation work on the iconic Greek Revival colonnade. The copper roof, which was last repaired after bomb damage in the Second World War, will be replaced and the underside of the roof along the colonnade will be restored. The sculptures in the pediment will be surveyed to find out whether they need any conservation. These magnificent figures by Sir Richard Westmacott illustrate the *Progress of Civilisation*, celebrating 19th-century pride in human achievement. The Museum will remain open during the work and visitors will still be able to come in through the main entrance on Great Russell Street and the entrance on Montague Place. We anticipate that the work will be completed in 2021.

Caroline Bugler
Editor, British Museum Magazine



Roger Fenton, *The British Museum*, c.1852. The photograph was taken shortly after the building was completed.

Migration of faith

In the mid-4th century, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was exiled five times by four emperors. The recently completed AHRC-funded research project, 'Migration of Faith: Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity (AD 300–600)' has shown that he was only one of hundreds of bishops banished for religious dissent and that this practice shaped the early Church. Individual bishops were not the only ones affected by exile. They had entourages of up to 300 people and they often moved over long distances. Their influence shaped the communities they left behind, those they took with them, those they met on their journeys and those they founded upon reaching their places of exile. Rather than preventing the dissemination of teachings and doctrinal position, many of these exiles had the opposite effect.

Athanasius himself spent his time in exile in Gaul, Italy and Upper Egypt, travelling to Constantinople and through the Balkans. His exiles ultimately ensured that the Church adopted the Nicene Creed, which defines global Christianity to this day.

Some of the results of this project are published at <https://blog.clericalexile.org/>

Elisabeth R. O'Connell,
Byzantine World Curator and
Julia Hillner, Professor of Medieval
History, University of Sheffield



Late Byzantine
steatite plaque
depicting
Athanasius, bishop
of Alexandria.



Detail of an 18th-century Tibetan thangka depicting the Mahasiddha Saraha (top), and the infrared image revealing the underdrawing (bottom).

Seeing the invisible

A thangka is a Tibetan Buddhist painting, usually depicting a deity, scene or mandala. It functions as one of the principal meditation tools in Buddhist practice by connecting the viewer with the iconographic imagery associated with particular Buddhist teachings.

Despite the divine purpose of these 'maps' towards spiritual progress, these paintings had mortal creators, striving to achieve perfection using ground mineral and organic pigments. Precise underdrawings and annotations were often made in preparation. Mantras were also often included in these preparatory phases, further empowering the painting. These details were then forever hidden from view by the final paint layers.

As part of preparations for the *Tantra: enlightenment to revolution* exhibition, specialist imaging techniques in the department of Scientific Research at the British Museum were used to 'see' some of these invisible details from a thangka depicting the Mahasiddha Saraha. Details, such as the revisions to the underdrawing, were revealed by using infrared light to non-invasively observe the deepest layers of the painting. These provide a fleeting glimpse of the artist at work and their freedom of expression and creativity. The results have provided key insights into the production and past conservation of these sacred paintings.

Joanne Dyer, Colour Science: Scientific
Research and **Alice Derham,** Conservator:
Art on Paper, Collections Care

The British Museum makes acquisitions to extend knowledge of different cultures and places. These works have recently joined the collection

Wulfric the warrior

This late Anglo-Saxon walrus ivory seal matrix, one of only four surviving examples in the world, probably dates to about 1050. The obverse shows a three-quarter bust-length figure of a man who holds a sword in his right hand and with the other hand points towards a legend which reads '+ SIGILLVM WULFRICI', identifying him as Wulfric. The handle shows a mass of writhing parts representing a single serpent or monster devouring itself. Small holes drilled into the centre of the handle would

have allowed the matrix to be worn around the neck or carried by means of a cord.

The seal is all that is known about Wulfric. His sword shows that he was a warrior, his jaunty position and outstretched arm advertising his intention to defend his rights by warfare. Above him, the self-devouring serpent handle makes clear that he is a man to be taken seriously. Wulfric's use of a seal matrix indicates that he was a landowner – a member of the highest ranks of Anglo-Saxon society.



Anglo-Saxon walrus ivory seal matrix, c.1050.

Within a generation the world he knew would be forever changed by the invasion and conquest of England by William of Normandy. This acquisition is supported by John Rassweiler, The Ruddock Foundation for the

Arts, the Henry Moore Foundation and the British Museum Patrons.

Lloyd de Beer
Ferguson Curator of Medieval Britain and Europe

Meiji era prints

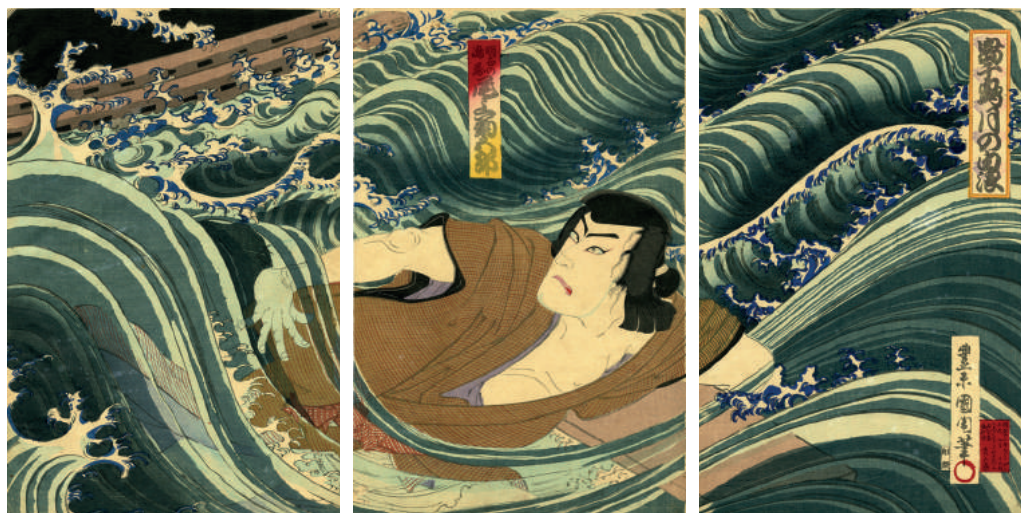
After three decades of sharing his knowledge of Japanese prints with the British Museum, Tim Clark celebrated his retirement at the end of 2019 with yet another gift: the donation to the Museum of a group of Japanese colour woodblock prints that he had collected

in his student days, and that stayed with him through his long career. The group reflects the range of subjects and techniques that appeared in Japanese prints during the mid- to late nineteenth century. This period is often associated with the landscapes of

Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige, but with his specialist's knowledge Clark focused on areas that were less explored at the time he was collecting: actor prints, privately commissioned prints, and the battle prints of the Meiji era (1868–1912). His personal favourite

is this triptych by Toyohara Kunichika (1835–1900), showing the kabuki actor Onoe Kikugorō V in a play performed during the summer of 1890.

Alfred Haft
JTI Project Curator for Japanese Collections



Toyohara Kunichika, *The kabuki actor Onoe Kikugorō V*, colour woodblock print.

Here comes the sun

In May 2018, a metal detectorist in Shropshire made the find of a lifetime: cushioned by peaty soil for 3000 years was an astonishingly well-preserved gold pendant decorated on all its shimmering surfaces with semi-circles and geometric motifs. During this period, the find-spot would have been a wet, fen-like landscape.

The pendant is one of the most significant discoveries from the Bronze Age to be made in Britain for more than a century. It is two-sided, allowing it to be worn with either side facing forward. One side shows a



Bronze Age gold pendant.

stylised setting or rising sun. It belongs to an incredibly small number of precious objects made during the Bronze Age to celebrate the religious and life-giving power of the sun. They have been found across Europe, and include the famous

Trundholm Sun Chariot from Denmark and the 'sun discs' of north-west Europe.

The pendant has been acquired by the Museum thanks to a generous grant from the Art Fund and the American Friends of the British Museum. Money

from the British Museum's Research Fund is allowing us to explore the landscape context and shed light on why such a precious jewel was cast into watery darkness.

Neil Wilkin
Curator: Early Europe

In peril on the sea

The Museum has recently acquired three drawings from the Shipwreck series produced by the British-born painter Cecily Brown, who since the early 1990s has been living and working in New York. She began the series of over 30 works on paper, executed principally in watercolour, in 2016 when she came across a reproduction of Delacroix's painting *Christ Asleep during the Tempest*, c.1853 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Brown often draws upon the work of earlier painters just as Delacroix himself drew upon the compositions of Rembrandt. In this work she investigates the structure of Delacroix's composition and the terrifying ordeal of Christ's apostles in the storm-tossed open boat.

The other two Shipwreck drawings take as their starting point Géricault's monumental *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19 (Louvre, Paris). One gives a close-up of clamouring figures, one of



Cecily Brown, *Untitled (Shipwreck)* 2016. Gouache and watercolour. Funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation © Reproduced by permission of the artist.

whom forlornly waves for attention with a makeshift flag amid a turbulent sea of blue watercolour wash. This drawing has been given by the artist in memory of her friend, the London gallerist Karsten Schubert. In the other drawing (generously funded by Guy Halamish) the scene pulls back to show a passing ship on the horizon and the frantic waving of

those aboard the doomed raft. While inspired by famous art-historical precedents, the Shipwreck drawings seem also to echo contemporary events: the perilous and often tragic crossings by refugees in the Mediterranean in recent years. These drawings were first shown at the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester in 2017–18 and then included

in Brown's retrospective at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark in 2018–19. Acquired with the support of the Thomas Dane Gallery, London, they are the first works by Cecily Brown to enter the British Museum's collection.

Stephen Coppel
Curator: Modern Collection, Prints and Drawings

Gifts from the past

Amelia Dowler tells the story of how a father and daughter created an outstanding coin collection

In 1946 Jessie Lloyd donated a collection of Greek coins to the British Museum as a bequest in memory of her husband, Dr Albert Hugh Lloyd (1864–1936) and her daughter, Muriel Eleanor Haydon Lloyd (1893–1939), who had assembled the collection. Albert and Muriel worked together in Cambridge, funding their collecting with wealth generated by Albert's business interests in the cotton industry in Manchester. Following Muriel Lloyd's arrival at Newnham College in 1913 to read Classics, the whole family settled in Cambridge, where Albert Lloyd became a Fellow Commoner at Christ's College and devoted his retirement to numismatics and history.

Although it was Albert who published on Greek coins in the 1920s and 1930s, Muriel, as a classicist, conducted research on her father's behalf. Following her father's death she donated a collection of Greek and Etruscan vases to the Museum of Classical Archaeology in Cambridge, in his memory.

The Lloyd collection of over 1700 coins focused mainly on Greek, Punic, and Siculo-Punic mints in Sicily and southern Italy. When it was published in 1933, it was described as the best in private hands. It was the largest whole collection of Greek coins to come into the British Museum since the 19th century. Today, coins from the bequest form a large proportion of the Museum's holdings in these areas.

The Lloyds built up the collection between 1920 and 1933 by buying at public auctions and private sales. Among the most important purchases were parts of the collection of the renowned archaeologist Arthur Evans, and the collection of the Marchese Roberto Venturi Ginori, considered one of the most significant in Italy. The Lloyd collection also contained coins from important hoards acquired during the Lloyds' travels in Italy and Sicily. Among them was the Cefalù (ancient Cephaloedium) hoard buried in c.300–290 BC, containing coins of Syracuse, Siculo-Punic coins and one posthumous coin of Alexander the Great.

It was Muriel Lloyd's wish that the collection be donated to the nation. However due to conditions in war-time Britain, Jessie Lloyd arranged for the collection to stay in storage and the bequest was not announced until 1946.



Muriel Lloyd,
Newnham College
Cambridge
1913–17
(© Newnham
College Archives).

To find out how to support the British Museum through a donation or gift in your will, please contact the Development Department at +44(0)20 7323 8933 or email development@britishmuseum.org



Silver tetradrachm
of Agathocles of
Syracuse (317–
289 BC) from the
Cefalù hoard.

Living with art

Highlights from Alexander Walker’s extraordinary art collection are touring the UK and Ireland writes **Catherine Daunt**

In 2004 the Museum received a bequest of over 200 modern and contemporary prints and drawings from the film critic and author Alexander Walker (1930–2003), highlights of which will tour to four venues in the UK and Ireland from April 2020.

Walker was born in Portadown, Northern Ireland but lived in London from 1960 when he was appointed film critic for the *Evening Standard*. He found great pleasure in collecting art and living with it on his walls. Walker’s decision to leave his collection to the Museum was motivated largely by a desire to share this pleasure with others. *Living with art: Picasso to Celmins* has been

David Hockney, *Jungle Boy*, 1964. Etching and aquatint in black and red on mould-made paper © David Hockney Photo: Richard Schmidt.



organised to coincide with the publication of a full catalogue of Alexander Walker’s bequest. The exhibition will include the earliest work in the collection: a drypoint by Picasso from 1908–9, and the most recent, an aquatint by the Latvian-American artist Vija Celmins from 2002. The selection will demonstrate the extraordinary range of the collection and explore Walker’s interest in works that show a development in style, technique or subject matter for an artist. Key works include study drawings by Victor Pasmore, Philip Guston and Bridget Riley, and prints by David Hockney, Lucian Freud and Paula Rego.

A British Museum touring exhibition *Living with art: Picasso to Celmins*, generously supported by the Dorset Foundation in memory of Harry M. Weinrebe, is on view at Winchester Discovery Centre, from 4 April to 28 June; Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, from 3 August to 4 October; F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio, Northern Ireland, from 17 October to 30 January 2021; National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin from 20 February to 30 May 2021.

Sitting comfortably

One of the largest porcelains in the Sir Percival David Collection at the British Museum, a beautiful glazed blue and white garden seat dating from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), is set to tour the UK in 2020 – the first time it has been lent to an external venue. It will travel to museums in Manchester, Newcastle and Exeter, and each museum will situate the garden seat in a different context that relates to its collections.

The garden seat was made for the court of the Wanli Emperor (1573–1620). Crafted in Jingdezhen, the porcelain capital of China for over 1000 years, the large hollow seat gives an invaluable insight into Chinese court culture. It features blue dragons surrounded by clouds, waves and a flaming jewel. Dense patterns of leaves and flowers ornament the sides, which are pierced with intricate rings. The use of a dragon is significant, because in China dragons are used as an auspicious motif and as a shorthand for the emperor himself.

The Spotlight Loan follows on from the tenth anniversary of the arrival on long-term loan of the Sir Percival David Collection at the British Museum. One of the foremost assemblages of Chinese ceramics in the world, the collection comprises some 1700 objects, primarily ceramics dating from the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, spanning 1000 years.

Jessica Harrison-Hall
Curator: Chinese Ceramics, Percival David, Vietnam.



Large hollow blue and white porcelain garden seat, Jingdezhen, 1573–1620. © The Trustees of the British Museum, lent by kind permission of the Trustees of the Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art.

A British Museum Spotlight Loan *A Ming Emperor’s seat* will be on display at Manchester Museum from 7 February until 19 April 2020, Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle between 25 April and 19 July 2020 and at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, from 25 July until 18 October 2020. Generously supported by the Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art.



Objects on loan

Emma Dunmore lists some of the British Museum loans on view across the UK

Cyril Power, *Soldiers murdering Thomas à Becket*, 1931. Colour linocut.

Canterbury

Thomas Becket: World Celebrity Healer
The Beaney
15 May–27 September

This exhibition coincides with the 850th anniversary of Thomas Becket’s murder in Canterbury Cathedral. Among the objects the British Museum is lending are a late medieval reliquary pendant and a 1931 linocut print, both of which depict the murder. Miracles after Becket’s murder, recorded in stained glass, led to a Europe-wide spread of relics and images, making Becket a world celebrity.

Harrogate

Their safe haven: Hungarian artists in Britain from the 1930s
Mercer Art Gallery
25 April–31 August
It is 100 years since the signing of the Treaty of Trianon at Versailles, which split Hungary apart and began to push artists westwards (a process which speeded up in 1933 with the rise of Nazi Germany). This exhibition follows seven Hungarian artists who came to Britain and made their way as artists, craftspeople, illustrators and teachers.

Oxford

Young Rembrandt
Ashmolean Museum
Until 7 June

This major exhibition focuses on the first ten years of Rembrandt’s career, revealing his remarkable metamorphosis from insecure teenager to the greatest Dutch painter of all time. The display ranges from the earliest works he made in his native Leiden to those he produced when he was on the brink of stardom in Amsterdam. Over 30 paintings and around 90 drawings are on display.

Sutton Hoo

Swords of the Kingdoms: The Staffordshire Hoard at Sutton Hoo
The National Trust, Sutton Hoo
14 May–29 November

British Museum objects will come together with loans from Birmingham Museums Trust (Staffordshire Hoard) and Norwich Castle Museum (East Anglian material) so that items from the Staffordshire hoard can be compared with magnificent objects from the same period. The exhibition will address the question of whether some

of the warrior regalia in the Staffordshire Hoard may have actually come from the kingdom of East Anglia.

Various venues

Wampum: Stories from the Shells of Native America
The Collection, Lincoln, 4 April–17 May; Guildhall Art Gallery, London, 25 May–4 July; SeaCity Museum, Southampton, 11 July–23 August; The Box, Plymouth, 5 September–24 October
Commemorating the 400th anniversary of the *Mayflower’s* voyage to America, this exhibition

acknowledges the Wampanoag people who met the ship. Four wampum belts from the British Museum will be displayed as well as a specially commissioned new belt.



Iroquois wampum belt, c.17th–18th century.

The British Museum lends objects around the world. These are some of the exhibitions currently showing the Museum's objects. Listing compiled by Caroline Bugler



Marble slab from the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos (see Auckland).

Europe

Aarhus

Bound for Disaster: Pompeii and Herculaneum
Moesgaard Museum
Until 10 May

The exhibition takes visitors on a tour of the vibrant city of Pompeii at its height, when Romans lived the high life before disaster struck the Bay of Naples in AD 79, and both Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed by Vesuvius. On display are artefacts that have never previously been shown outside Italy.

Madrid

Vampires. The evolution of myth
Caixa Forum
Until 7 June

From their first appearance in film, vampires have provoked and tantalised admirers. Visitors to this exhibition will get to know these fabled monsters

through their appearance in cinema, television, collage, paintings and prints.

Paderborn

Life at the Dead Sea: Archaeology from the Holy Land
LWL – Museum in der Kaiserpfalz
8 May–11 October

For many years, the water level in the Dead Sea has dropped by an average of about one metre per year. If this continues, the unique salt lake between Israel, the West Bank and Jordan could soon disappear – and with it a special natural phenomenon. Several archaeological finds, some 12,000 years old, provide evidence of a unique culture.

Paris

Albrecht Altdorfer
Musée du Louvre
23 April–3 August
Albrecht Altdorfer (c. 1480–1538) was a

major artist of the German Renaissance. This mainly monographic exhibition aims to demonstrate the rich diversity of his work, and his inventive use of form and subject matter.

Rome

Raphael
Scuderie del Quirinale
Until 2 June
More than 200 masterpieces, including paintings, drawings and comparative works, have been gathered together in this major exhibition devoted to Renaissance superstar Raphael, 500 years after his death in Rome at the age of just 37.

Zaragoza

American Dream
Caixa Forum
15 July–18 October
This British Museum touring exhibition traces the creative momentum of American printmaking over six decades, from the early 1960s to artists working today. More than 150 works will be on display.

exhibition introduces six mummified individuals who lived in Egypt between 3000 and 1800 years ago. CT scanners have revealed images of human remains and objects hidden in the mummy wrappings.

Washington

Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art
11 April 2020–31 December 2021
West African gold once fuelled trade and drove the movement of people, culture and religious beliefs. This major exhibition addresses the scope of Saharan trade and the shared history of West Africa, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe from the 8th to the 16th century.

Oceania

Auckland

Ancient Greeks: athletes, warriors and heroes
Auckland War Memorial Museum

3 July–18 October

Sculpture, jewellery, armour, vases and sporting paraphernalia are used to investigate the theme of competition in ancient Greece in this international touring exhibition.

North America

Toronto

Egyptian Mummies: Ancient Lives, New Discoveries
Royal Ontario Museum
16 May–7 September
This international touring



The Bat, c.1922. Etching (see Madrid).

We aim to ensure that information about exhibitions outside the British Museum is correct, but readers are advised to check with venues before visiting.

Kiliii Yuyan, *Umiaq and north wind during spring whaling*. Inkjet print, 2019.
©Kiliii Yuyan.

The Citi exhibition

Arctic: culture and climate

*The Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery, Room 30
28 May–23 August*

Lead supporter Citi, supported by Julie and Stephen Fitzgerald and AKO Foundation

From 28,000-year-old mammoth ivory jewellery to modern refitted snow mobiles, the objects in this immersive exhibition reveal the creativity and resourcefulness of Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic. Developed in collaboration with Arctic communities, it celebrates the ingenuity and resilience of Arctic Peoples throughout history, demonstrating how they have harnessed the weather and climate to thrive.



Tantra: enlightenment to revolution

*The Joseph Hotung Great Court Gallery, Room 35
23 April–26 July
Supported by the Bagri Foundation*

A philosophy originating in medieval India, Tantra has been linked to successive waves of revolutionary thought, from its 6th-century transformation of Hinduism and Buddhism, to the Indian fight for independence and the rise of 1960s counter-culture. On display will be extraordinary objects from India, Nepal, Tibet and Japan.

Edmund de Waal: library of exile

*Room 2
Until 8 September
Supported by AKO Foundation*

A library housing over 2000 volumes by writers who experienced exile is housed in a specially built pavilion whose external walls list the world's lost libraries. Alongside the bookshelves

is *psalm*, a quartet of vitrines containing de Waal's porcelain vessels.

Rivalling Rome: Parthian coins and culture

*Room 69a
Until 6 September*

The twists and turns in the rivalry between the Parthian Empire and Rome are documented in the coinage of the period. This exhibition

also examines the Parthian legacy in the Iranian tradition and the Persianate world.

French Impressions: prints from Manet to Cézanne

*Room 90
Until 9 August
Supported by Ronald E. Bornstein*

Prints were all the rage among the Parisian

art-loving public in the Impressionist era. On display are etchings and lithographs that were as ground-breaking as the avant-garde paintings of the period.

Piranesei drawings: visions of antiquity

*Room 90
until 9 August
Supported by the Tavolozza Foundation*

The Museum's entire collection of Piranesi drawings is on display, featuring the glories of Roman architecture alongside fantasy creations.

The Asahi Shimbun Displays Japanese Olympics 1964

*Room 3
11 June–6 September
Supported by the Asahi Shimbun*

Posters, medals, badges and photobooks produced for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics commemorate an event that was a key moment in Japan's welcome back into the international community after the Asia-Pacific War.



Figure of Kālī striding over recumbent Śiva. Painted and gilded clay.

Durga defeating the buffalo-demon Mahisha, 8th century, Odisha, India.



Chamunda, 9th century, Madhya Pradesh, India.



Sacred transformations

Imma Ramos examines the origins and legacy of the revolutionary philosophy of Tantra

Originating in 6th-century India, Tantra is a philosophy that has been linked to successive waves of revolutionary thought, from its early medieval transformation of Hinduism and Buddhism, to the Indian fight for independence and the rise of 1960s counter-culture in the West. Tantra is rooted in instructional sacred texts called *Tantras*. They take their name from the Sanskrit word ‘tan’, meaning ‘to weave’ or ‘compose’, and are often

written as a dialogue between a god and a goddess. The exhibition opens with some of the earliest surviving *Tantras* in the world, on loan from Cambridge University Library. These manuscripts outline a variety of rituals for invoking one of the many all-powerful Tantric deities. The *Tantras* also describe rituals that transgressed existing social and religious boundaries, such as sexual rites and engagement with intoxicants and the taboo. These rituals affirmed all aspects of existence as sacred, including the body and the sensual, in order to achieve liberation and generate power.

The first section of the exhibition explores the rise of Tantra in India and, in particular, the philosophy’s radical challenge to gender norms. Tantra

presented a new world view which saw all material reality as animated by Shakti – divine feminine power. This inspired the dramatic rise of goddess worship in medieval India. Tantric goddesses challenged traditional models of womanhood as passive and docile in their intertwining of destructive and maternal power. An 8th-century sculpture represents the goddess Durga, a weapon-wielding, lion-riding warrior who fights demons that threaten the stability of the universe.

In another temple sculpture the Tantric goddess Chamunda carries a sword of wisdom in one of her many hands, with which she destroys obstacles to enlightenment. She dances on a corpse which embodies the fragile

human ego that must be overcome. Although she appears fierce, she also conveys compassion and a desire to assist followers on their spiritual path.

Rulers across India commissioned public temples which incorporated Tantric goddesses as guardians. In a 10th-century monumental example in eastern India 64 goddesses, known as Yoginis, encircle the interior walls. The exhibition will feature an imaginative and immersive recreation of this temple which will transport visitors to a time when devotion to these goddesses was at its height. Tantric masters sought to access their powers, from shapeshifting

to immortality and flight.

This vision of the world as charged with feminine force informed the lives of real women in India who were empowered to play important roles as gurus or teachers. They were able to transcend the conventional roles of womanhood – as wife, mother or lover. A mid-18th-century Mughal painting depicts a noblewoman who has travelled a great distance to visit two Tantric female masters to seek counsel or initiation.

New techniques of Tantric yoga emphasised the importance of balancing and uniting feminine and

masculine forces within the body, by visualising a goddess at the base of the spine, surrounded by *chakras* or energy centres. Awakening this inner goddess through breath control became the ultimate goal of Tantric yoga. This cosmic vision of the body is visualised in paintings on loan from the British Library and Wellcome Collection.

The next section of the exhibition explores the spread of Tantra across Asia via pilgrimage networks. Instrumental in the transmission of Tantric teachings to the Himalayas were the Mahasiddhas or Great Accomplished Ones. Their life stories



A woman visiting two female Tantric masters, c.1750, North India, Mughal.



The Mahasiddha Jalandhara, 16th century, copper alloy, Tibet. Rubin Museum of Art.



Raktayamari
in union with
the goddess
Vajravetali,
16th–17th century,
bronze, Tibet.

are filled with miraculous events and they became hugely popular in Tibet. Jalandhara was one of the most famous – an important bronze of him performing Tantric yoga is on loan from the Rubin Museum in New York. He is balancing on a personification of his own ego, which he has transcended. Another wonderful loan from the Rubin Museum is a Tibetan painting of the renowned female Tantric master, Machig Labdron, who lived in the 11th

century. She introduced new Tantric practices designed to overcome the fear of death and attachment to self, and initiated hundreds of disciples.

One of the themes the exhibition explores is the role of sex and divine union in Tantra, in order to confront some of the more prevalent stereotypes of the philosophy as a ‘cult of ecstasy’. In Tantric texts, gendered symbolism is often used to articulate the two qualities to be cultivated on the path

towards enlightenment, wisdom and compassion. These are visualised as a goddess (representing wisdom) and a god (representing compassion) in sexual union, as we see in a Tibetan bronze, in which the goddess swings one leg over the god’s thigh in a passionate embrace. Their wild eyes and laughing, fanged mouths suggest their immense power. The goal is to internalise their qualities by visualising the deities uniting within the body through meditation.

The third section of the exhibition explores how Tantra was harnessed for its insurgent potential during the fight for Indian independence in the late 19th century. Indian revolutionaries in Bengal reimagined Tantric goddesses such as Kali as symbols of an independent India rising up against the British, which will be reflected in newly acquired popular prints that circulated across India at the time and inspired anti-colonial activity. Visitors will see these alongside dramatic sculptures of Kali wearing garlands of decapitated heads. Her mouth is smeared with blood and she sticks out her tongue, as though thirsting for more. Revolutionaries effectively exploited British fears and misconceptions of the goddess as a bloodthirsty ‘demon mother’. In the exhibition the true meaning behind her symbolism, tied to both destructive power and maternal strength, will be decoded.

The final part of the exhibition reveals how Tantra has been reimagined from the 20th century until today. In the 1970s South Asian artists associated with the neo-Tantra movement adopted Tantric symbols and adapted them to speak to the visual language of global modernism. Many were inspired by Tantra’s engagement with social inclusivity and spiritual freedom. Paintings by the Kashmiri artist Santosh feature androgynous figures seated in meditation.

In the UK and the US, Tantra had an impact on the period’s radical politics, where it was interpreted as a movement that could inspire anti-capitalist, ecological and free-love ideals. One poster advertises the Human Be-In

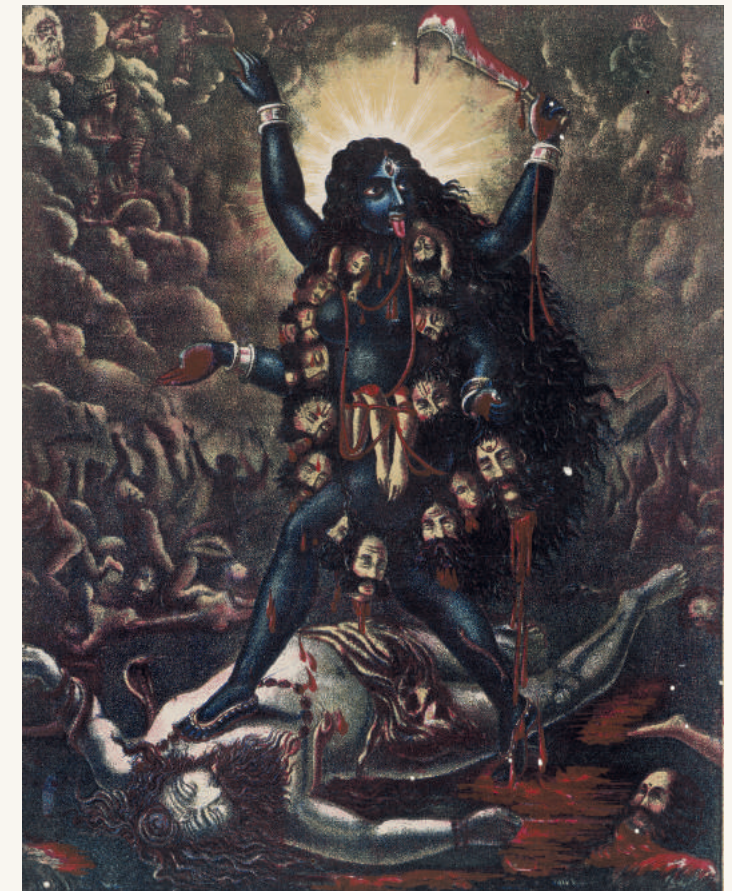
festival, held in San Francisco, which heralded the summer of love in 1967. Yoga and meditation were promoted as transformative practices that could inspire minds to challenge the status quo. Practitioners of Tantric yoga captured the popular imagination in the West as counter-cultural role models.

Today, Tantra is as alive as ever. Sects in India, including the Aghoris, reveal its enduring power. The practices of the Aghoris include smearing their bodies with the ash of burnt corpses from funerary pyres, as seen in an image from a photographic archive documenting different Tantric communities. This is traditionally deemed to be polluting. However, for the Aghoris, transgressive practices are an expression of the Tantric assertion that all is sacred and there is no distinction between what is conventionally perceived as pure and impure, just as there is no distinction between the self and the divine.

Tantra has gone on to influence modern feminist thought and artistic practice. Female artists have harnessed Tantric goddesses through the bodies of real women, evoking them in a feminist guise. The exhibition ends with dramatic works of art, including one by the Bengal-born British artist Sutapa Biswas. The title of this almost 3 m-tall mixed-media painting, *Housewives with Steak-knives*, challenges the stereotype of the submissive wife confined to the kitchen. Here the ‘Housewife’ as Kali wears a garland of heads that the artist describes as figureheads of authoritarian patriarchy.

The exhibition will offer new insights into a philosophy that has shaped lives and captured imaginations for more than a millennium, charting Tantra’s enduring potential for opening up new ways of seeing and changing the world.

Tantra: enlightenment to revolution, supported by the Bagri Foundation, is on display in the Joseph Hotung Great Court Gallery, Room 35, from 23 April to 26 July. For the book accompanying the exhibition see page 60.



Print depicting
the goddess
Kali, Calcutta Art
Studio, Kolkata
(Bengal, India),
c.1885–95.



Sutapa Biswas,
*Housewives with
Steak-knives*,
1985, Bradford
Museums and
Galleries.

Weathering climate change in the Arctic

Amber Lincoln assesses the achievements of Arctic Peoples and their resilience in the face of current challenges

At its heart, The Citi exhibition *Arctic: culture and climate* explores Indigenous perspectives on Arctic environments and histories, and addresses the timely topic of climate change through the lens of weather. Indigenous Arctic Peoples are at the front line of global climate change. The Arctic is warming at more than twice the rate of anywhere else. Climate scientists predict that Arctic summers will be ice-free within 80 years, raising sea levels and altering weather patterns worldwide.

Highlighting Indigenous perspectives on our rapidly changing world, this immersive exhibition will create an unparalleled opportunity to marvel at the achievements of Arctic Peoples (their hand-crafted tools, sewn garments, artwork, photography, films and stories) while learning from their resilience. Arctic Peoples have lived with climate variability and dramatic daily and seasonal weather fluctuations for 30,000 years. Through cultural adaptation, material innovation and social collaboration they have persevered amid intense environmental and social disruption. But if the Arctic is ice-free within 80 years, what will happen to these rich ways of life and artistic expressions centred on the ice and cold?

The creation of this exhibition has been a collaborative endeavour and results from the tremendous commitment and contributions of numerous Arctic Peoples. Indigenous community and research partners generously shared their knowledge with us during research visits to Alaska, Canada and Sweden, and during museum documentation

Kenojuak Ashevak, *Nunavut Qajanartuk (Our Beautiful Land)*. Lithograph and watercolour, 1992. Reproduced with the permission of West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative.



Arts cooperative founder Sheila Katsak and BM curator Amber Lincoln work together in Mittimatalik, Canada, 2019.



Young people sewing their own printed parkas with Elders Nicotye Qimirpik and Siita Saila in 2019 in Kinngait, NU. Left to right, back row: Janine Manning, Kunu Pudlat, Siita Saila, Cie Taqiasuk, Alexa Hatanaka, Saaki Nuna, Nicotye Qimirpik; front row: David Pudlat, Iqaluk Quvianaqtuliaq. Photo by Patrick Thompson.

visits with Inupiat, Sakha and Inuit advisors at the British Museum. This knowledge and these perspectives provide invaluable content and structure to the exhibition. Other types of collaboration take on a material form. We have commissioned a very special art installation by the socially engaged art collective Embassy of Imagination. Composed of Inuit young people from Kinngait, Nunavut Canada and two Toronto-based artists, Alexa Hatanaka and Patrick Thompson, the collective has organised workshops in Kinngait and Pangnirtung, Nunavut, focusing on local survival skills such as travelling on the land and ice and sewing as well as creative practices like printmaking. Their artwork, *Parkas, Silapaas* (working title) is made from *washi*, a type of Japanese paper that has been sewn into *silapaas*, thin outer Inuit parkas. Each *silapaa*'s design is carved from found objects and materials and then relief printed onto the *washi*.

European perspectives often place the Arctic on the periphery of the

world. But for Arctic Peoples who have traded and exchanged ideas, materials, and livelihoods with one another for millennia, it is the centre of the world. Today, four million people live in the Arctic and 400,000 are Indigenous with ancestral ties to the region. These ties predate and transcend the establishment of the eight Arctic nations: Russia, USA, Canada, Greenland/Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. There are 40 different cultural groups with distinct languages and dialects, many of them represented in the exhibition.

The Arctic is often imagined as barren and empty. Although there are lean seasons corresponding to the dark winter months, these alternate with periods of extraordinary abundance. Summer's continuous daylight generates a phenomenal growth in sea algae, attracting migratory whales and walrus. When the snows melt, plants spring to life, producing berries and greens that support reindeer and migratory birds. Arctic Peoples have thrived by effectively harnessing the great concentrations of

plants and animals in summer to carry them through winter. Arctic cultures are bound to the climate with community activities, ceremonies and celebrations structured around the seasons, as depicted in a painted lithograph, *Nunavut Qqjanartuk (Our beautiful land)*, by Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013).

One of the most amazing things about the Arctic is that its Indigenous inhabitants have made warm homes and a hospitable homeland out of icy ecosystems. Ice is both materially and metaphorically foundational to life here. It serves as building material for roads and temporary shelters, and it enables people to travel widely, providing access to bountiful worlds. An engraved walrus tusk by Inupiat artist Angokwazhuk ('Happy Jack') (1875–1918) depicts innovative transport well adapted to icy seas. When sea ice moves in, Inupiat and Inuit place their lightweight boats on small sleds to reach open water where sea mammals and migrating birds gather.

Based on living with, observing, and telling stories about the weather

Man's woollen, cloth and otter fur winter hat (*čiehkagahpir*), Sámi, Karasjok (Norway), 1945–55. Bequeathed by Harry Ely.



Bone spoon, Ust-Polui, Salekhard (Russia) c.1st century BC–1st century AD. MAE RAS (Kunstkamera), St Petersburg.



Angokwazhuk ('Happy Jack'), engraved walrus tusk, early 1900s. Inupiat, Nome, Seward Peninsula (Alaska, USA). Donated by The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.



Seal intestine parka, Yupiit, Bristol Bay, Alaska, before 1930. Purchased from Mrs F. Hillyer.

over generations, Arctic Peoples have maintained profound and reciprocal relationships with it. These relationships are expressed through stories and in clothing designs. The Sámi Four Winds hat represents an origin story about an encounter between a *noadi*, a Sami spiritual leader, and spirits. Long ago, Sápmi, the Sámi homeland of

Fennoscandia, was too windy for Sámi to live there. One day a *noadi* lulled the Four Wind spirits to sleep with his yoiking, traditional Sámi singing, capturing them in his hat. Upon waking, they protested violently, pulling his hat in four directions. In return for their release, they agreed to take turns blowing, making Sápmi habitable.

As part of these long-standing relationships with the weather, Arctic Peoples have developed advanced knowledge of weather patterns, in order to predict and safely prepare for difficult conditions. Seamstresses rely on particular temperature and humidity conditions to achieve the delicate but durable waterproof seal gut

that is made into waterproof parkas, such as the Yup'ik one from Bristol Bay on show. Unfortunately, weather patterns and sea-ice conditions are becoming unpredictable as a result of climate change, making generations of such knowledge obsolete and putting travellers in danger. Knowing the extent to which weather is woven into Arctic lives is a crucial step towards understanding how rapid climate change is undermining an ancient relationship and knowledge that have developed over millennia.

The first Arctic Peoples settled in Siberian high latitudes at least 30,000 years ago. Since that time, the Arctic has experienced several naturally occurring climate shifts, gradually changing over thousands of years. Arctic Peoples responded to these past shifts in climate with resilient strategies, through adaptations, innovations and collaboration. Needles dating back 28,000 years, from the north-east Siberia Yana Rhinoceros site, are some of the most important material innovations for living in the Arctic because threaded needles created tailored clothing that allowed mobility in extreme cold. An elk bone spoon comes from Ust Polui in north-west Russia, a 2000-year old settlement in which different cultural groups converged on the Ob River to trade and worship. In the process they exchanged ideas, which ultimately generated a new economy. The oldest evidence of reindeer herding comes from this site.

Moving from the deep past into the more recent past of the last 300 years, we can trace these same resilient strategies as Arctic Peoples have responded to rapid social, economic and political change. Across the Circumpolar North, Indigenous People have mitigated the challenges associated with European exploration, colonial governments, state-sponsored religions and new markets by adapting, innovating and collaborating.

A watercolour painting on cotton linen from the late 18th century by Nikolai Shakhov (1770–1840) depicts this critical



Nikolai Shakhov, Drawings on Tapestry, 1830–40. Watercolour on calico, 1315 x 780 mm. MAE RAS (Kunstkamera), St Petersburg.

period for the peoples of Siberia's Ob river valley during Russia's annexation of Siberia. The artist, of Cossack heritage, lived in Siberia and was an administrator for the Russian state. He depicts Khanty and Nenets, Indigenous Siberians, procuring pelts to pay state taxes, and the Russian Orthodox church within a fortified area, aiming to convert locals. A second watercolour, *Samoyed Chiefs*, highlights how Nenets leaders were appointed as colonial representatives, securing stable trade relations and representation within the Empire.

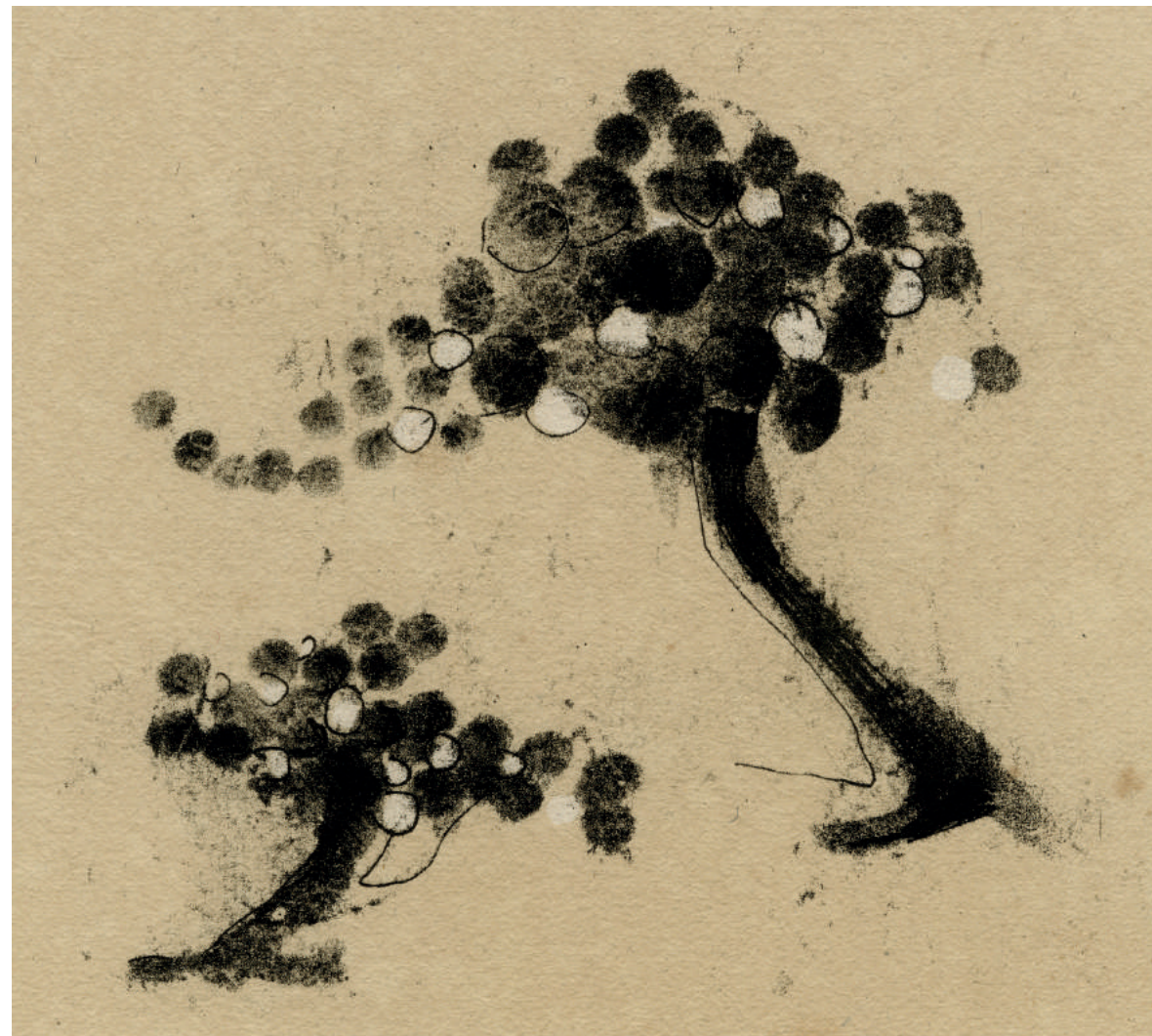
Today, Arctic Indigenous organisations are leading in global climate advocacy and initiatives, collaborating transnationally, resourcefully working with governments, scientists and organisations to confront the devastating effects of global climate change. Two Arctic organisations – the Shishmaref Erosion and Relocation Coalition and the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Alaska – have formally curated a section in this exhibition, highlighting the threats to their communities of coastal erosion and food security as a result of climate change and the ways they are mitigating these threats. As Twyla Thurmond, tribal coordinator for the small community of Shishmaref Alaska says, 'Shishmaref, and other Alaska Native communities are demonstrating how people can stay strong and unified in their search for answers to climate change, the most challenging problem of the 21st century'. These are the resilient stories presented in this exhibition. In their own voices, Indigenous Arctic organisations are presenting both the challenges and achievements of living with weather and climate change.

The Citi exhibition Arctic: culture and climate, lead supporter Citi, supported by Julie and Stephen Fitzgerald and AKO Foundation, is on view in the Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery, Room 30, from 28 May until 23 August. For the book that accompanies the exhibition see page 60.



Geoffrey Clarke,
Icarus, 1951.
Etching.

Geoffrey Clarke,
Trees, 2000.
Lithograph.



The Geoffrey Clarke bequest gives an unparalleled insight into the artist's working methods, says **Grant Lewis**

The British Museum has a distinguished history of acquiring works directly from artists, which continues to this day. These collections within collections have a special character. Typically composed of rough, working material as much as pristine works of art, they offer a warts-and-all portrait of the creative process in which the artist's presence is never far away. It was therefore with much excitement that the Museum obtained a significant portion of the studio contents of Geoffrey Clarke RA (1924–2014), acquired through the Acceptance in

Lieu scheme. One of post-war Britain's most prolific sculptors and printmakers, Clarke is best known for his contributions to the Venice Biennale and the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral, but he was also extremely prolific as a printmaker and medallist. These smaller-scale works are the focus of the bequest: comprising some 250 of the artist's prints and 60 of his medals, plus notes, archives and drawings, it makes the Museum one of the largest repositories of Clarke's work, which can now boast a copy of every print and medal he ever made. But still more important is the unparalleled view it provides of the artist at work over a period of more than five decades, which is a central theme of a display celebrating the bequest.

This working quality unites many of its items. It is keenly felt, for example, in Clarke's designs made in the early 1960s for a RIBA working group developing a new decimal currency for the UK, where the ideas reveal both originality and awareness of manufacturing methods. A similar practicality permeates the entire collection of prints. While there are plenty of fine impressions intended for sale, many more are Clarke's own trial impressions made solely for his own use, on which he made corrections and recorded the

outcome of his technical experiments. In the 1950s in particular, easily Clarke's busiest period as a printmaker, these proofs were also sources of inspiration, and Clarke was not afraid to use his own copies as notebooks for ideas that they had directly inspired. In one particularly revealing example from June 1950 included in the display, he was seemingly prompted to fill the bottom of the sheet with a series of jottings of forms generated from those explored in the print above.

Clarke may have intended to develop these ideas in print or bronze. As the bequest makes clear, the boundary between the two was blurred in his work. Being first and foremost a sculptor, he was keenly aware that the process of making a printing plate was a sculptural one, and to this end

he engaged in many playful elisions between the two media, casting his printing plates, framing others as independent reliefs and making three-dimensional prints that are a form of sculpture in their own right. His delight in flitting across media is equally apparent in the repeated exploration of a single motif in both two and three dimensions. Different aspects of sculptural commissions were also given further consideration in print, for example with the bronze *Icarus* made for the Festival of Britain of 1951, which was recast in 'negative'. In other cases Clarke's devotion to a motif lasted several decades, most notably with a simple design of a tree, which was issued as a suite of medals in the early 1970s and a handful of prints in the millennium.

This ability to maintain a constant dialogue with his earlier work was evidently one of the most important functions of Clarke's archive. It is still more apparent in Clarke's final prints from the 1990s and 2000s, which offer both a new visual language and a reflection on the works from his printmaking heyday in the 1950s. The last print in the exhibition, for example, *Searching*, was etched in 2003 on a plate Clarke had prepared around 50 years earlier. The result is a curious mix of variety and coherence that permeates all the works on display.

Geoffrey Clarke: a sculptor's studio is on display in Room 90a until 19 April.

Geoffrey Clarke,
Serpent Eating Apples from the
Destruction of the Environment
series, 1973.
Brass, 64 mm.



Salamis uncovered



Terracotta statue of an under life-size bearded male figure wearing earrings, a broad diadem or turban and an elaborate dress consisting of three garments, 7th century BC.

New research is producing fresh insights into early excavations in Cyprus, reports **Thomas Kiely**

The reserves of the British Museum are home to many finds from archaeological excavations carried out when the discipline was still in its infancy in the 18th and 19th centuries, which are the subject of ongoing research by museum staff working in collaboration with our colleagues in source countries. They continue to add to our knowledge of famous ancient sites which have been explored with greater scientific precision in modern times. One such is Salamis in eastern Cyprus, a few miles to the north of the stupendous medieval walls of Famagusta. During the first millennium BC Salamis was the capital of one of the richest and most powerful kingdoms on the island. In Hellenistic and Roman times, it was the economic and administrative centre of Cyprus, as well as a crucible of early Christianity associated with its first bishop, St Barnabas. Abandoned in the 7th century AD, its buildings were subsequently quarried for building stone but the ruins also attracted antiquarians as early as the Renaissance period, when Venice ruled the island.

A number of ever-more ambitious excavators gravitated towards the site in the later 19th century, when interest in Cyprus's material past became something of a mania, particularly for foreign residents. The infamous brothers Luigi and Alessandro Cesnola dug extensively in Salamis's extensive burial grounds in the 1870s, though like other visitors they found little of interest in the urban settlement because centuries of abandonment had reduced the site to a mass of rubble overlain by vast quantities of sand blown in from the sea.

When archaeologist David Hogarth visited in 1888, he memorably described Salamis as a 'hideous chaos of ruin'.



Fragments of the left side of the head of a large-scale terracotta statue of a male wearing a cap or helmet with side flaps, with large almond-shaped eyes and thick eyebrows, 7th century BC.

Worker during the 1890 excavations holding two fragments of large-scale terracotta statues, one of which is part of the fragment shown above. Ashmolean Museum, Munro Archive, photograph 34.



This was soon to change. Hogarth had just completed the first season of excavations by the Cyprus Exploration Fund. This was established in 1887 to take advantage of a recent ruling by the island's High Commissioner, Sir Henry Bulwer, that restricted excavation permits to scientific institutions such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenistic Studies in London, who between them created the CEF. Alexander Murray, Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, was very enthusiastic about the work, but a lack of funds meant he was unable to offer any financial contribution towards the substantial costs of excavations. Nonetheless, the Museum received many of the finds allocated to the CEF, with others going to museums

in Nicosia, Oxford and Cambridge. This was allowed by the antiquities law operating in Cyprus at the time which shared finds between the local authorities and the excavators.

Between 16 January and 24 May 1890, as many as 180 men, women and children toiled to remove the debris accumulated over centuries covering the ruins, the shape of ancient buildings and other features slowly emerging from the fug of time. Unlike their predecessors, who were largely interested in intact or valuable objects likely to appeal to private collections and museums (and who therefore focused on burial grounds and shrines), the chief excavators, Oxford classical scholars James Arthur Ruskin Munro and Henry Arnold Tubbs, had rather more holistic aims. They wished to establish in detail the urban layout of the ancient city,

including its famous harbour, and to elucidate the historical record through the discovery of new inscriptions which could be compared with written sources for the city's long and dramatic story.

Although not always fully aware of the true nature of their discoveries, Munro and Tubbs identified many impressive buildings and finds and, more importantly, published them in a recognisably modern form in a pioneering article that appeared the year after the excavation – many modern fieldworkers are not so efficient! Chief among these was the main gymnasium of the city packed with ancient sculpture, which they thought was a shrine to Zeus. Then there were the remains of several large Christian basilicas, one dedicated to the leading church father St Epiphanius of Salamis. And, finally, a colonnaded street (dubbed

the ‘Agora’) some 250 m long and 60 m wide leading to the Temple of Zeus, in front of which was a 3.5 ton marble capital in the form of a bull’s head that originally sat on top of a votive column. Also explored were some burials in the cemetery area (though the excavators wisely avoided the temptation to search for treasure-filled tombs), a Roman house and the remains of several shrines.

Indeed, despite the rich sculpture and architecture and many inscriptions in Greek and Latin found throughout the urban area, Munro and Tubbs judged their most important discovery to be a small deposit of highly fragmentary terracotta statues found on a small rocky rise (called Toumba or ‘mound’ in the local Cypriot Greek dialect) to the south of the city. Many of the statues were originally life-sized or even colossal

(some up to 3.5 m high) and preserved the brilliant painted decoration used to depict the opulent clothing of the subjects, which resembled that of the contemporary Near East, especially the Assyrian Empire. Many of the figures wore distinctive helmets with side flaps – rather like a modern deer-stalker – and carried swords suspended on baldrics, while others were shown as worshippers holding offerings for the gods. This small army of clay worshippers was placed in this holy place to honour the gods and goddesses of the city in perpetuity, so that they would protect the city and especially its harbour which, before it silted up, probably extended inland close to the site of Toumba itself.

Equally striking is the date of these monumental statues. Stylistic and archaeological analysis shows that they

were made during the 7th century BC, a time when Cyprus was nominally a vassal of the mighty Assyrian Empire but able to maintain its own political and cultural autonomy to a considerable degree. The Toumba statues represent some of the earliest large-scale sculpture in the Mediterranean world, as early as anything comparable in Greece and Etruria; Salamis’s commercial and cultural interactions with its Levantine neighbours and the eastern Greek world had helped to create a rich, exuberant and cosmopolitan society.

Despite these successes, the CEF was unable to continue its work into a second season because of the lack of money. Indeed, it could not even afford to transport the single most impressive find, the marble bull’s head capital, as far as Nicosia, let alone the UK. It was instead donated to the British Museum, which asked the Royal Navy to bring what had become government property back to London. Over several days in February 1891, the crew of the HMS *Melita* and around 40 local workers hauled the capital from Salamis to Famagusta, where it was carefully placed in the hold of the ship to continue its long odyssey to Bloomsbury. A photograph of this process in the BM archives, taken when the capital was being moved through the streets of Famagusta, shows a wonderful cross section of the diverse communities of early British Cyprus at the time.

In the years following the CEF campaign, Salamis attracted occasional excavators, as well as many more tourists and schoolchildren, but the scale of the original excavation was difficult to emulate. Large-scale exploration resumed only in 1952 in the final years of British colonial rule, but was continued with great energy and success by the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus until 1974, especially under the direction of Vassos Karageorghis, a long-standing collaborator of the British Museum with whom I recently published the finds from Toumba in collaboration with Anja Ulbrich (Ashmolean Museum) and Anastasia Christophilopoulou (Fitzwilliam Museum). Not only were many of the structures uncovered by the CEF re-examined at this time,

Marble capital of a column with a caryatid between the foreparts of winged bulls (one bull’s head is missing), 3rd century BC.



The bull capital being moved in 1891.



with many more treasures uncovered, but meticulous scientific work in the cemeteries of the ancient city revealed spectacular burials of Salamis’s elite. This is the so-called ‘Royal Necropolis’, whose finds are one of the chief delights of the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia and some of which featured in the British Museum’s *Ashurbanipal* exhibition in 2018.

The Toumba statues excavated many years ago no doubt represent images of this gilded elite, which served as intermediaries between their human subjects and the immortal gods. Yet who knew that the broken fragments of their powerful images would one day be resurrected by the descendants of the same people who crafted them

some 27 centuries ago? Just as history often remembers the rulers, it also credits the equally privileged excavators with these discoveries. As the precious archival images show, it was the often forgotten hands of the local workforce that revived the memory of the once great city of Salamis and its formidable ‘terracotta army’.

Excavation workers at Salamis Site B, 1890. Ashmolean Museum, Munro Archive, photograph no. 77.



Head of a votive figurine wearing a turban (?). Sanctuary of Apollo-Reshef, Idalion, Cyprus, c.600 BC.



The terracotta figurine after treatment.



Cleaning with lasers

As we celebrate a century of science and conservation at the Museum, **Duygu Camurcuoglu** and **Amy Drago** give details of a revolutionary new application of laser technology

We use lasers in many different ways at the British Museum: for research, imaging, analyses and conservation treatments. For many years we have also used them to clean stone objects. This began in 2002, when a dual wavelength Nd:YAG (neodymium yttrium aluminium garnet) laser was first brought into the Museum during the conservation work for the refurbishment of the King's Library, now named the Enlightenment Gallery. The Museum was able to acquire this Nd:YAG laser in 2005. In 2018, as part of ongoing laser cleaning research, the Museum further acquired an Er:YAG (erbium doped

yttrium aluminium garnet) laser.

The Er:YAG laser has been used to successfully remove coatings and overpaint from a Coptic wall painting (see *British Museum Magazine* Autumn 2019), and has been tested on other materials including metals and stone. Recently it has been used to remove dark staining on Cypriot terracotta and limestone figures as part of the Museum's Cyprus Digitisation Project. The surfaces of the statues, some of which were painted, were covered with dark and ingrained speckles of biological growth, which disfigured their appearance and obscured physical

features, manufacturing details and surviving pigments. In the Conservation department we investigated the root of the conservation problem as well as how to remove this stubborn staining. Traditional cleaning methods – swabbing with solvents and Agar gel – produced unsatisfactory results, so we needed to explore an alternative method that was time-efficient, controllable and selective. Working closely with the Scientific department, we carried out preliminary tests on the discreet areas of the figurines using Nd:YAG. The results were not what we had hoped for, so we chose Er:YAG lasers for the treatment of both the painted and unpainted figurines.

Before proceeding with the Er:YAG treatment, we used multiple scientific techniques to analyse the various layers of the terracotta and limestone figures and the pigments to determine their sensitivity to the laser radiation. The figurines were carefully observed under the microscope and the polychrome traces were recorded with micro-photography before, during and after treatment. This revealed a relatively limited palette, which included red and yellow ochre, manganese black, green earth and traces of Egyptian blue.

The laser trials showed that the treatment successfully removed the staining and destroyed the old organisms without changing the colours. The treatment was also extremely time-efficient, as only one or two hours of work were needed to clean each figurine. It was the first time Er:YAG lasers had been used to remove biological growth from the terracotta figurines, and the project won the Nigel Williams Prize, which is awarded to an outstanding professional project focusing on the conservation or restoration of ceramic, glass or a directly related material.

Apart from revealing previously obscured features and painted decoration, this project has provided more information about fabric, manufacturing, use of colour and the impact of burial on the present state of the objects. It has also facilitated the study, photography and display of the collection while highlighting how knowledge of past collection care can better inform current practices.

Members of the project team were Dr Duygu Camurcuoglu, Dr Lucia Pereira-Pardo, Miriam Orsini, Amy Drago, Stephanie Vasiliou, Dr Kasia Weglowska, Dr Thomas Kiely and Dr Capucine Korenberg. We would also like to thank Ed and Ann Teppo for their constant support and enthusiasm and for donating a Nd:YAG and an Er:YAG laser to the BM. We are also grateful to the Andrew Mellon Foundation for providing postdoctoral research fellowships, and the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the American Friends of the British Museum for their invaluable support.

Duygu Camurcuoglu using the Er:YAG laser on a terracotta.



Making an impression

Printmaking enjoyed a boom in late nineteenth-century France, as **Jennifer Ramkalawon** discovers

Images of the intoxicating world of the café-concert, the whirling skirts of the can-can dancer and the bustle of street life in markets and grand boulevards tell only half the story of printmaking in 19th-century Paris. Our current exhibition *French Impressions: prints from Manet to Cézanne* aims to provide a more rounded account of French printmaking in the last 40 years of the 19th century by exploring a close-knit circle of artist-printmakers.

From the 1860s prints were eagerly collected by an emerging middle class. This new audience prized etchings above engraved reproductions of their favourite paintings or mass-produced lithographs, prompting the critic and collector Philippe Burty to observe that ‘the etching bridged the gap between the painting and engraving’. Etchings were considered authentic as they were directly connected to the artist’s hand. Closely akin to drawing, they were made by sketching on a wax ground applied to a copper plate. They were produced quickly and with considerable freedom compared to the careful and intense process used to create an engraving.

The demand for etchings led the publisher Alfred Cadart to set up the

Société des Aquafortistes in 1861. At the society’s headquarters in Paris on the rue de Richelieu, Cadart and his printer Auguste Delâtre produced volumes of etchings to sell to the public by subscription. He also offered studio space and lessons in etching for aspiring printmakers.

One of the artists whose work Cadart published was Charles Meryon. He was unable to make a living as a painter as he was colour-blind, so turned to printmaking and made a career solely from producing etchings. After a stint in the navy in the 1840s, he gained considerable success with his print series *Views of Paris* (1854), which was much admired by fellow artists. Possibly the best-known work from this series is

Le Stryge, showing one of the vampyric gargoyles high above the buttresses of Notre Dame. However, Meryon did not want to promote his own work and destroyed the plates of his Paris series after its second printing. A loner by nature, he was unstable and volatile, ending his days in an asylum.

Félix Bracquemond was a great champion of Meryon, etching his portrait in 1853. Although his name is almost forgotten today, Bracquemond was a prolific printmaker and a great advocate for etching. He was a keen supporter of Cadart, and one of the founders of the Société des Aquafortistes, along with Édouard Manet, whom he persuaded to experiment with printmaking. Manet considered prints and paintings as equal and presented both at the Salon exhibitions and contributed to Cadart’s first volume of etchings in 1862.

Cadart also tried to encourage several artists to make original lithographs by sending them lithographic stones. He sent one to Manet in order to try out the process, which resulted in *Le Ballon* (1862), showing a seething mass of people gathered near Les Invalides. The print was never published as Cadart’s venture in producing lithographs failed. However, Manet continued to make lithographs for himself, producing images of incredible freshness and verve, such as *Les Courses* (1860s), which depicts the racecourse at Longchamps.

Manet’s close friend Berthe Morisot, who was part of the Impressionist circle, appears in many of his works. He made several prints of her, loosely based on his painting *Berthe Morisot with a Bouquet of Violets* (1872). Morisot also made prints, but produced only a handful of etchings, mainly of domestic subjects, including a self-portrait with her daughter Julie, one of her favourite models. In 1890 Morisot accompanied her friend, the American artist Mary Cassatt, to an exhibition of Japanese prints at the École des Beaux Arts. The show had



Charles Meryon, *Le Stryge* (The Vampire), plate 6 from the series *Views of Paris*, 1854. Etching.



Édouard Manet, *Berthe Morisot*, 1872–4. Lithograph on pale grey chine collé. Bequeathed by Campbell Dodgson.



Mary Cassatt, *The coiffure*, fourth and final state, 1891. Colour drypoint, soft-ground etching and aquatint. Bequeathed by Campbell Dodgson.



Edgar Degas, *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre: the Etruscan Gallery*, c.1879–80. Soft-ground etching, drypoint and aquatint.



Camille Pissarro,
*Paysage sous
bois, à l'Hermitage
(Pontoise)*, 1879.
Soft-ground etching,
drypoint with aquatint,
printed on japan
paper. Bequeathed by
Campbell Dodgson.

a profound effect on Cassatt and inspired her to make colour aquatints based on the Japanese prints she had seen, giving greater emphasis to colour and line in her work.

Cassatt was not alone in her enthusiasm for Japanese prints. As Japan opened up to the West, these prints began to appear in France at the end of the 1850s. 'Japonisme', the craze for all things Japanese, swept through France and many artists were influenced by the economy of line, unusual viewpoints and flattening of forms that were characteristic of Japanese woodblock prints. An avid collector of Japanese prints and by far the most experimental printmaker of this period, Edgar Degas used printmaking to obtain effects that were impossible to achieve in any other medium, continually reworking his plates that often depicted the same subject. During the 1890s he made countless prints of a woman getting out

of a bath seen from various different viewpoints, clearly influenced by scenes from Japanese prints.

Degas and Cassatt were also great friends and his print, *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre: the Etruscan Gallery* (c.1879–80) shows Cassatt with her sister Lydia. This print was revisited many times by Degas, who was fascinated to see the different effects achieved by constantly retouching the plate.

Camille Pissarro, with the possible exception of Degas, was the Impressionist artist most interested in printmaking, making many etchings from the 1860s and taking up lithography a decade later. In 1878 he met Degas, who encouraged him to explore a greater variety of printmaking techniques. Degas had planned to found a journal for artists' prints and Pissarro's masterful print *Paysage sous bois, à l'Hermitage (Pontoise)* (1879) was made specifically for this project. Here he used soft-ground etching, aquatint and drypoint to create



Vincent van Gogh,
L'Homme à la pipe,
1890. Etching.
Presented by Paul
Gachet in memory
of Vincent van Gogh
and Dr Paul Gachet.

an atmospheric rural idyll. However, Degas' magazine *Le Jour et la Nuit* failed to materialise so Pissarro, evidently piqued, took the opportunity to display four states of the print at the 1880 Impressionist exhibition in order to demonstrate the complex technical developments in its production.

Pissarro was instrumental in introducing Paul Gauguin to Vincent van Gogh. These two artists spent a fateful few weeks together in Arles in 1888 which ended in Van Gogh's mental breakdown. On Pissarro's advice Van Gogh went to stay with Dr Gachet in Auvers after a spell in the asylum at St Rémy. It was Gachet who taught Van Gogh to etch. He made only one etching, a portrait of Gachet, who looked after him in the final weeks of his life.

The last ten years of the 19th century saw a spectacular explosion in print production. In the 1890s, lithography became the most exciting form of

printmaking. Advances in technology, particularly in colour printing, paved the way for the glorious posters of Toulouse-Lautrec and many others. Lautrec inhabited the nocturnal world of café-concerts and the theatre, which he captured in the numerous prints he made of actresses and music-hall stars, such as Jane Avril and May Belfort.

Lautrec's work also appeared in the growing number of illustrated journals and specialist magazines that enabled graphic works to reach a wider public. Mostly sold by subscription, some included original prints. Publications like *L'Estampe Originale* published work by many of the leading printmakers of the day and inspired the ambitious and talented Ambroise Vollard to publish print portfolios himself. One of the most innovative art dealers and print publishers of his generation, Vollard commissioned original lithographs from painters and launched his first print album of 22 prints in 1896 and his second a year later. In 1899 Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard produced two superb portfolios for Vollard that capture lively anecdotal scenes of Parisian life, which Bonnard later referred to as 'the theatre of the everyday'.

Renoir and Pissarro persuaded Vollard to hold the first exhibition of Cézanne's paintings in 1895. Critical reception was underwhelming apart from a glowing review in *La Revue Blanche* by Thadée Natanson and the enthusiasm of fellow artists. Cézanne was a reluctant printmaker, but Vollard successfully persuaded him to make

three lithographs for him, including the monumental *Les Baigneurs* (1897).

Without risk-takers such as Cadart and Vollard the story of the graphic arts in France would be restricted to clichéd fin-de-siècle images of hedonistic pleasure. By examining the close links between artists and the influence of brave publishers, a different light can be shed on printmaking in this period.

French Impressions: prints from Manet to Cézanne, supported by Ronald E. Bornstein, is on show in Room 90 until 9 August.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *May Belfort*, 1895.
Colour lithograph.
Presented
by Campbell
Dodgson.



Pierre Bonnard,
Boulevard,
from the series
*Quelques aspects
de la vie de Paris*,
1899. Colour
lithograph.
Bequeathed
by Campbell
Dodgson.

Three maiolica chocolate cups from Sloane's collection, listed in Sloane's catalogue of 'Miscellaneous things' as 'Eleven chocolate cups of various shapes & designs, some broken from Abbe Sterbini's collection.'



Classifying Sloane's collections

Alexandra Ortolja-Baird focuses on the enjoyment and challenges of deciphering Sir Hans Sloane's collection catalogues

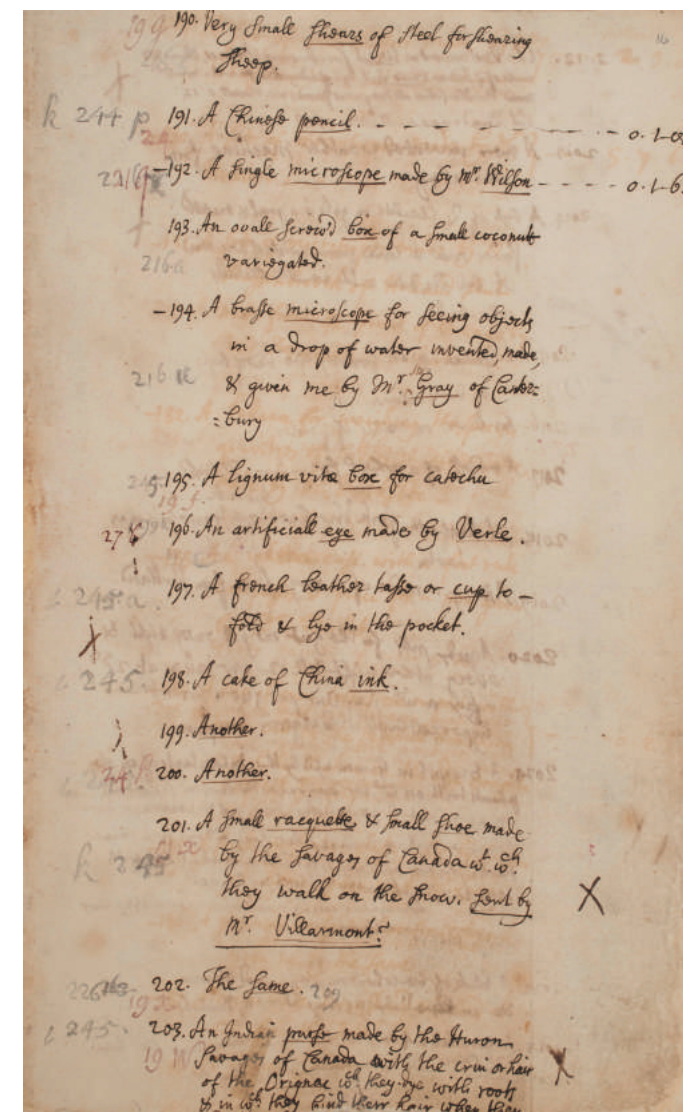
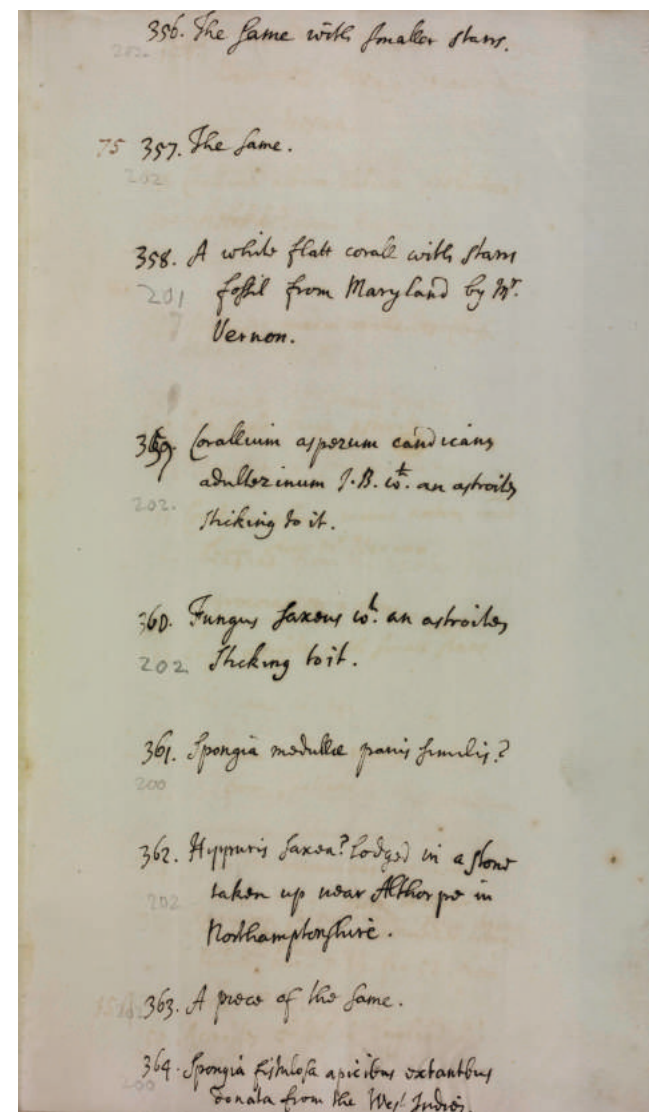
The vast and eclectic collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) continues to intrigue and attract visitors to the British Museum. Walking through the Enlightenment Gallery, one encounters diverse objects that once lined the shelves and cabinets of Sloane's own home: three delicately glazed maiolica chocolate cups; a collection of shoes from Morocco, the Coromandel Coast and the Pyrenees; and a vibrant watercolour album of Surinamese insects painted by the artist Maria Sibylla Merian, to name but a few. Their preservation in the Museum is thanks to Sloane's own concern for the legacy of his collection. At his death in 1753,

Sloane offered his personal collection of more than 120,000 antiquities, botanical specimens, books, manuscripts, fossils, coins and other objects to the nation for the modest sum of £20,000. In so doing, he helped to facilitate the birth of the British Museum, and his bequest became one of its foundational collections and, later, of the Natural History Museum and British Library.

Yet while Sloane's objects have become cherished elements of the British Museum collection, less attention has been paid to the accompanying catalogues that once recorded, organised and numbered them. During his life, Sloane and his assistants produced more than 40 handwritten catalogues documenting the individual parts of his collection. These records contain detailed descriptions of Sloane's objects, as seen and interpreted through his own eyes, and include information regarding their provenance, their possible uses, their shape, size and colour. Small sketches of some of the objects were added by the 19th-century curator

Augustus Wollaston Franks, and the catalogues, now divided between the three national institutions that hold his collections, are still used to identify items. The descriptions are often as curious as the objects now on display. We know from Sloane's catalogues that he once possessed 'a belt made from unicorns horn', 'An Indians girdle made of died porcupines quills?' and a hinge taken from 'the coffin of Queen Mary daughter of king Henry 8 taken off by a Labourer that was mending the vault'. Some of these objects survive but many have not, or are no longer identifiable.

The Leverhulme-funded research project 'Enlightenment Architectures: Sir Hans Sloane's Catalogues of his Collections' has spent three years exploring Sloane's original catalogues in various ways. In collaboration with the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, the project has used Digital Humanities approaches to investigate the composition, organisation and content of five of Sloane's catalogues, including his catalogue of 'Miscellaneous



Above left: Folio 96 from 'Fossils'. Library and Archives, Natural History Museum, London.

Above: Folio 16 from Sloane's catalogue of 'Miscellaneous things'.



Two Chinese seals that were part of Sloane's collection. The seal on the far left is described in Sloane's catalogue of 'Miscellaneous things' as a 'Chinese or Japanese seal, letter mark or wood cutt upon chrySTALL'.

things, Antiquities, Seals, Pictures, Mathematical Instruments, Vessells, Agates, Cameos, Intaglios' (from the British Museum library); two catalogues of 'fossils', the first of which includes 'Coralls, Serpents, Echini, Crustacea, Starrfishes, Humana', the second 'Fishes, Birds, Eggs, Quadrupeds' (Natural History Museum library); one catalogue of books and another of manuscripts (British Library). Our research has focused on making Sloane's catalogues 'machine-readable' – digitally rendering the text, annotations, references and other textual and visual elements of Sloane's catalogues in a way that allows them to be searched more easily than turning the pages of the fragile manuscripts, and for data to be extracted from them which can then be used for computational analysis. To do this, Enlightenment Architectures

has used the internationally approved guidelines set up by the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) which allows us to encode such elements as catalogue numbers, the use of pencil and ink, dates and bibliographic references. This approach enables us to analyse trends that are invisible to the human eye and to better understand how Sloane's cataloguing relates to the state of knowledge of his period. In addition, text encoding has allowed us to create a digital edition of the catalogues which can be explored by descriptive elements like colour, shape or texture, as well as by the names of people and places included in the descriptions.

The project has investigated many exciting avenues. It has shown how Sloane's catalogues functioned as a single site that brought together multiple layers of information and cross-

references to letters, books and to other objects in his collections. It has also revealed the disparities in how different types of objects were catalogued; how Sloane borrowed cataloguing practices from his peers; and how he grouped his objects in ways that today we find strange, such as objects made of one material that represented another, like a citron made of glass and ears and eyes made out of ivory.

However, one of the most striking realisations has been the extent to which we have faced the same difficulties of classification and description as Sloane in our own encoding. Take the 'red corall growing on a rock wt shells', for instance. What is the object in this entry? Is it the 'corall' or is it the 'red corall'? Are the rock and shells integral elements of this object? If not, why would Sloane record them? Moreover, what would Sloane have thought was the object? In spite of the more than 250 years that separate us, and today's sophisticated technologies and systems of classification, we, like Sloane before us, continue to struggle to define what things are, where they belong and how to classify them – in short, how best to use words to describe objects. This parity is a humbling reminder of the inherent subjectivity of records, technologies and systems of information management and the very human element of data collection.

The Enlightenment Architectures project and Sloane's digitised catalogues can be found at www.reconstructingsloane.org

Many of the objects described in Sloane's catalogues can still be found in the collection today, for example no. 203 'An Indian Purse' (far right) and no. 201 'a small racquette & small shoe made by the savages of Canada wt. wch. they walk on the snow'.



Power and grace

The 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics remain a model of cultural diplomacy, comments **Alfred Haft**

On the occasion of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, the Museum will present an exhibition exploring the links between athletics, diplomacy and social change. The display focuses on the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, which were a turning point in Japan's acceptance back into the international community after the Asia-Pacific War (1937–45).

The first section provides historical context. A Japanese promotional booklet published in 1937 features the Olympic logo on the back, prompting the narrative of the 1940 Summer Olympics, which were originally awarded to Tokyo but were cancelled by the Japanese government in 1938 on account of Japan's involvement in a war in China.

The second section examines the 1964 Olympics itself, centring on the event's four award-winning posters designed by Kamekura Yūsaku (1915–1997). At this time Japan's modern design innovations were recognised around the world. Supplementary objects include a set of gold, silver and bronze Olympic medals, and a record book highlighting the Japanese women's volleyball team's victory over their Soviet rivals to win the gold medal. Volleyball was introduced as a sport for the first time in 1964, and this match provided the athletic highlight of the Olympics for Japanese audiences. Also on show is a beautiful bronze commemorative medal designed by the modernist Okamoto Tarō (1911–1996), and a badge featuring the Bullet Train (Shinkansen), which was completed in time for the 1964 Olympics.

Kamekura Yūsaku,
The Start of the Sprinters Dash,
the second official
poster designed
for the 1964 Tokyo
Olympics © 1964 /
International Olympic
Committee – all rights
reserved.



The third section presents three artist's photobooks that take the viewer outside the Olympic Village. The first, by Takanashi Yutaka, shows how the modernising projects associated with the Olympics sometimes left admirable elements of Japan's past lost under concrete. In the second book, photographer Kawada Kikuji grapples with the legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the third book, Araki Nobuyoshi portrays a young resident of

a working-class Tokyo neighbourhood untouched by the urban developments carried out for the Olympics.

Japan's modern-day international success has rested in part on a willingness to recognise challenging histories and to reconcile with the past. The exhibition underlines the importance of the Olympics and sport in international relations and cultural diplomacy, as well as revealing the great skill and invention of modern Japanese design.



Tokyo Olympics 1964 is on show in the Asahi Shimbun Displays, Room 3, from 11 June to 6 September.

Gold medal for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics © 1964 / International Olympic Committee – all rights reserved.



Edmund de Waal, *library of exile* (installation view at Ateneo Veneto, Venice), 2019–20. © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and Gagosian. Photo by Fulvio Orsenigo.

Recording exile

Isabel Seligman

admires an installation that celebrates the words of the dispossessed

‘Dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen’ (Where books are burned, in the end, people will also be burned). These words from the German poet Henrich Heine are inscribed onto the walls of the *library of exile*. The temporary pavilion contains over 2000 books written by people who have experienced exile – either forced to leave their own country or displaced within it. It charts a history of the translation of people and ideas from

classical times to our own, including poets, philosophers, artists and scientists from Ovid and Einstein to Elif Shafak and Ai Weiwei. Its walls, covered with liquid porcelain, have been inscribed with the names of libraries lost and destroyed: from the ancient libraries of Alexandria and Antioch to the Mosul University Library in Iraq, devastated by the so-called Islamic State in 2015.

The *library* forms both a record of repression and a celebration of the writing of the dispossessed. It is the creation of Edmund de Waal, the celebrated artist and author best known for his large-scale ceramic installations, often created in response to the history of a particular place. These have included The Frick Collection, New

York; the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire. De Waal is also renowned for his bestselling family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010), which details the story of the Ephrussi family by tracing the journey of a collection of Japanese netsuke over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, and *The White Road* (2015), a personal exploration of the history of porcelain.

Before coming to the British Museum, the *library of exile* was first unveiled at the Ateneo Veneto – a historic debating chamber – during the Venice Biennale in 2019. It then travelled to the Japanisches Palais in Dresden, a place central to the history of porcelain in Europe, and the site of the celebrated

library that was firebombed by Allied forces in 1945. At the British Museum, the *library* is brought into dialogue with objects from the world’s historic libraries in its collections, including cuneiform tablets from the ancient Assyrian library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh in Iraq, Buddhist paintings on silk from Dunhuang in China, and seals from the Buddhist monastery of Nalanda in India. One tablet from the library of Ashurbanipal details the conditions of exiles under his rule: ‘The people are very weak; weather has eaten up their looks and the mountains have crushed them.’ The tablet itself is charred from the fire which consumed the library when Nineveh was sacked in 612 BC, but while the city was destroyed, the fire baked the clay tablets harder, making them some of the best-preserved documents of this period.

The British Museum was itself home to the British Museum Library from 1759 until 1997, when it moved (as the British Library) to its current premises in St Pancras. The *library of exile* is situated in Room 2, once called the Manuscripts Saloon, which was part of the King’s Library, completed in 1827 to house works from King George III’s library. At various times precious manuscripts including the Magna Carta, a Qur’an of 1304 commissioned by Sultan Baybars II and a 15th-century Haggadah for Passover (the ‘Ashkenazi Haggadah’) by Joel ben Simeon, as well as important Egyptian papyri, Persian miniatures and Hindu and Buddhist texts were exhibited there. Thousands of people studied in the Museum’s Reading Rooms, including thinkers such as Karl Marx (himself a political exile – many of his volumes are to be found in de Waal’s *library*) and Virginia Woolf. The Museum was hit by several bombs during the Second World War, and an air raid the night of 10–11 May 1941 resulted in the loss of some 250,000 books.

Eighty-eight different countries are represented in the *library of exile*, with most works appearing in translation, in de Waal’s words ‘to celebrate the idea that all languages are diasporic’. The books are accompanied by *psalm, I–IV* (2019), a quartet of de Waal’s vitrines

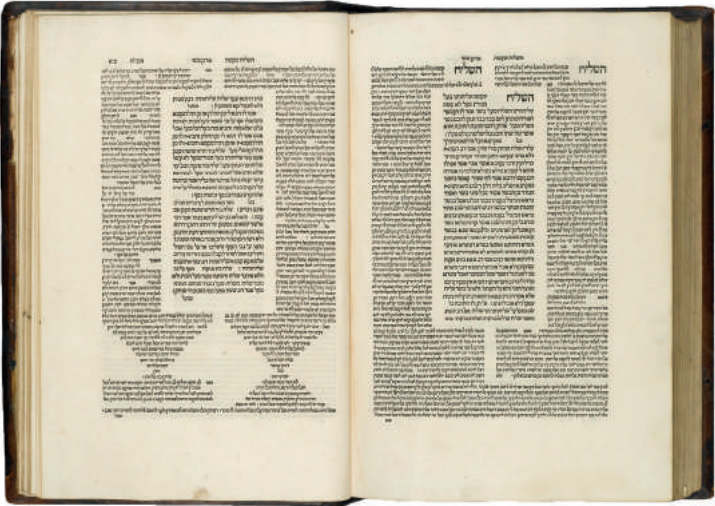
holding pieces of porcelain, marble and steel. Their arrangements reflect the composition of Daniel Bomberg’s 1519–23 edition of the Talmud, a central text of Judaism, printed in Venice, notable for holding the Hebrew, Aramaic translation and commentary on a single page. The *library* is accompanied by a rich programme of events including panel discussions organised in partnership with English PEN.

Following its installation at the British Museum, books from the *library of exile* will be donated to the Mosul University Library, which is currently undergoing reconstruction: an affirmation of the power of ideas to rise from the ashes.

Edmund de Waal: library of exile, supported by AKO Foundation, is on display in Room 2 until 8 September.



Edmund de Waal in the *library of exile*, 2019–20 (internal view with *psalm, I*, 2019). © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and Gagosian. Photo by Fulvio Orsenigo.



Pages from the Bomberg printing of the Talmud, 1519–23.

Visions of greatness

Piranesi's majestic prints have long been admired, but his drawings give us a more intimate glimpse of his development.

Sarah Vowles elucidates

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *The meeting of the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina viewed at the second milestone outside the Porta Capena*, c.1750–6. Pen and brown ink with brown and pink wash, over black (some lines drawn with the ruler) and red chalk.



Giovanni Battista Piranesi was born into a Venetian family of masons in 1720. Had all gone to plan, he would probably have made a successful career as a local architect: building mainland villas; designing elegant interiors; producing treatises on local antiquities; and, in quieter periods, creating dazzling stage sets for the opera which made full use of his perspective skills. Yet the young Piranesi wanted more. From the beginning he had a tempestuous character, and even his uncle, to whom he was first apprenticed, found him too difficult to work with. The young man had a fascination for ancient Rome and eventually, having been trained in all aspects of the architect's art, he was invited to join the entourage of the new Venetian ambassador to the Holy See.

Piranesi arrived in Rome in 1740, dreaming of greatness while he managed to eke out his allowance by cooking only once a week and living

on leftovers. He eventually realised that there was a market not only for souvenir views of Rome, but also more scholarly textbooks, and he focused his efforts on this area. By the time of his death, almost 40 years later, his views of Rome were among the most popular and influential in Europe, featuring in many a British country house library, and shaping how an entire generation of foreigners imagined Rome. Yet he had also become a fierce polemicist, known for specialised publications on Roman antiquity, an antiquarian and an art dealer. Alongside his writings on Rome, he had allowed his imagination to flourish in series of fantastical prints, most notably the *Carceri* or 'Prisons': ominous, labyrinthine interiors inspired by stage sets, with staircases criss-crossing in the darkness and shadows full of looming cranes and mechanisms. It is these, perhaps, which are most popular today, but Piranesi has never

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Fantastical façade of an antique building with two columns, heads and sphinxes*, 1763–7. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.



Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Figure drawing*, 1763–7. Pen and brown ink, brown wash. Presented by Jean-Luc Baroni in honour of Hugo Chapman.

been unpopular. His visions, whether of Rome, antiquity, or the tenebrous mazes of the *Carceri*, have always been admired and collected.

Piranesi is best known as a printmaker, and many exhibitions have focused on his etchings in the past, but he is less familiar as a draughtsman. The British Museum has one of the finest collections of his drawings in the world, and all 51 of them are currently on display, including a new acquisition from 2019 – the Museum's very first figure drawing by Piranesi. These drawings allow us to see Piranesi's development as an artist, as he evolved from the careful young man trained in the Venice of Canaletto, to the mature visionary who worked with a thick reed pen and dark, confident sweeps of iron gall ink. They give us glimpses

of all facets of his career. Here are early exercises in perspective, creating buildings fit for a stage; here too are amazingly fluid drawings from a brief return to Venice in the 1740s: in one, light, translucent washes animate a pair of unexpectedly lively skeletons which could have clambered straight out of a Tiepolo. There are studies for the *Carceri*, with their deeply shadowed interiors and dizzying perspectives, which evolve into some of Piranesi's most ambitious visions of ancient Rome. His reconstructions (or inventions) of classical antiquities, bringing together various elements into a new whole, are represented not only by two small drawings, but also by two fragments of Roman sculpture from the Museum's collection, excavated at Hadrian's Villa and purchased by Charles Townley

from Piranesi. Finally, there are drawings for one of Piranesi's last great projects: a planned publication about Pompeii, then newly discovered with all its wealth of artefacts and architecture. He died before the publication could be completed, but the drawings are among the earliest views of the site.

In this year, the 300th anniversary of Piranesi's birth, these works offer visitors the chance to see how drawings underpinned all aspects of his career, and allow them to encounter one of the 18th century's most creative, influential and tumultuous figures on his own terms.

Piranesi drawings: visions of antiquity, supported by the Tavolozza Foundation, is on view in Room 90 until 9 August. For the book that accompanies the exhibition see page 60.

Parthia versus Rome



Silver drachm of the Parthian king Phraates IV (38–2 BC) showing a bird of prey holding a diadem as a symbol of kingship in its beak. The reverse depicts the Parthian archer seated on a throne and holding a bow, also a symbol of kingship in the ancient Iranian world. The Greek inscription includes the title 'King of Kings'

Coins reveal a tale of rivalry and cultural exchange between two superpowers, finds **Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis**

The Parthians, also known as the Arsacids, were one of the three ancient Iranian dynasties of the pre-Islamic period. They rose to power in c.248 BC and ruled for almost 500 years until AD 224, when they were defeated by the Sasanians. By 140 BC, the Parthian state had extended into Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), and from around 96 BC the Parthians became Rome's most powerful opponents east of the River Euphrates. Their encounters with Rome were often related to the annexation of territories that lay between them and provided access to important trade routes. Armenia was particularly affected. Nevertheless, times of war

were complemented by peaceful periods, and throughout the centuries of rivalry there were also political exchanges between the two superpowers and visits to their respective courts.

A major East-West conflict between Parthia and Rome took place in 54–53 BC when Crassus, a member of the First Triumvirate, clashed with Parthian forces at Carrhae (modern Harran in southern Turkey). This encounter was disastrous for Rome: 10,000 Roman soldiers were captured, the Roman standards were lost and Crassus was killed. Rome's humiliation was deeply felt back home, and despite attempts by Caesar and Mark Antony to push back the Parthians during the reign of Orodes II (57–38 BC), the Parthians kept the upper hand. In 20 BC, the Emperor Augustus finally succeeded in negotiating the return of the captured Roman standards and gained the right to appoint the kings of Armenia. In return, the Romans agreed to acknowledge the River Euphrates as the boundary between Parthia and Rome.

In Rome, this diplomatic success was given a political spin. Coins of Augustus show a bearded Parthian figure kneeling on the ground as a suppliant and offering a Roman standard. A similar scene was depicted on the breastplate of the famous statue of Augustus of Prima Porta. From now on the bearded Parthian dressed in a trouser suit became the archetypal image of Rome's eastern opponents.

Despite the collapse of the Arsacid Parthian Empire in AD 224 and the subsequent rise of the Sasanians, Parthian influence endured in the art

and culture of Sasanian Iran and the Middle East. Characteristic features of Parthian art that continued into later centuries and even into the Islamic period include the use of frontal figures rather than profile representations, and the costume of jackets, tunics, trousers, and the long-sleeved overcoat, which were all part of the heritage of the Iranian riding peoples. The Parthian tradition of chivalry and heroism has echoed throughout Persian literature and it resonates today in the modern Iranian athletic tradition of the *zur-khaneh* (House of Strength).

In spite of the importance of the Parthian Empire and its lasting influence on the art and culture of Iran and some neighbouring countries, few attempts have been made to understand and evaluate this period. The paucity of primary written sources has made scholars heavily dependent on classical sources from the Greco-Roman world, which are inevitably biased in perspective. Furthermore, 19th-century European romanticism elevated the legacy of classical antiquity in order to promote a European identity based on the glories of ancient Greece and Rome. There was little sympathy for their opponents, who were all referred to as 'barbarians'. In Iran itself, the Parthians were regarded unfavourably by their successors, the Sasanians, who were keen to associate themselves with the Achaemenid Persians of southern Iran. For a long time, modern Iranians also regarded the Parthians as a dynasty derivative of the Hellenistic world, particularly in view of the use of Greek on their coinage. This could, however, be compared with Arabic on coins and documents of Iran in the Islamic period, which does not negate the Iranian-Persian character of Islamic Iran; or the use of Latin on medieval and modern European coins.

A new exhibition uses the coinage of the Parthians and their local kingdoms to shed light on the history and culture of the period. Together with evidence from objects, it presents a balanced view of the Parthian Empire and its relationship with Rome, as well as its legacy in the Iranian tradition and the Persianate world.

Terracotta figurine of a Parthian horseman with his bow and arrow and a quiver at his side. He wears a belted jacket and trousers. 1st–2nd century AD.

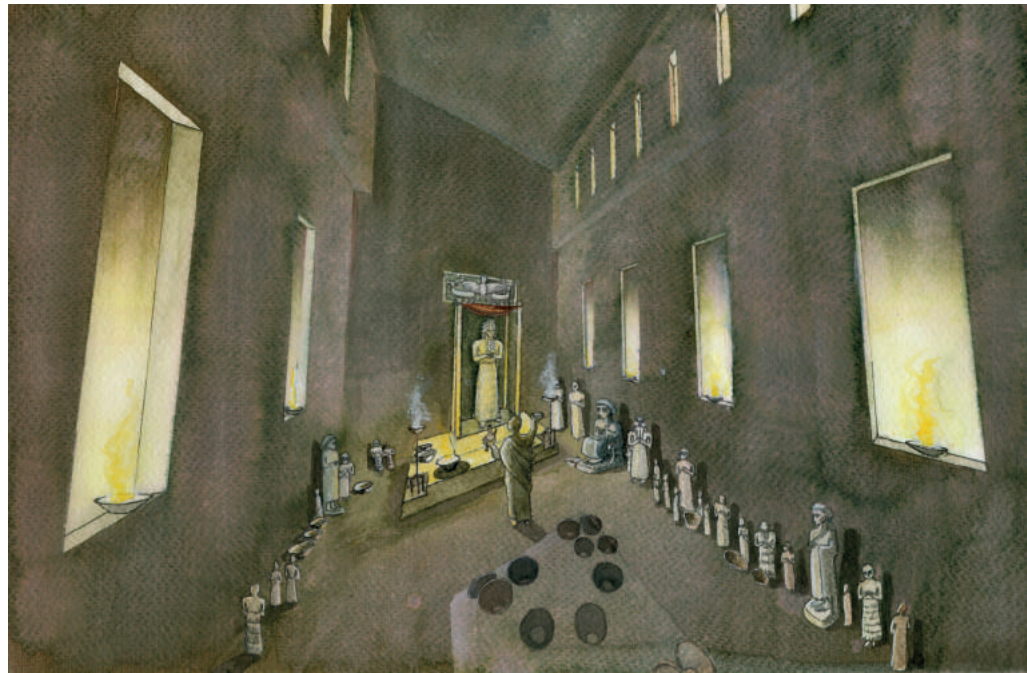


Silver tetradrachm of Orodes II (57–38 BC). The Parthian king on the obverse wears a diadem with long ties at the back. On the reverse, he receives a palm frond as a symbol of kingship from a goddess. The title 'King of Kings' appears in the Greek inscription.

Silver denarius of Augustus (31 BC–AD 14) with a bust of the goddess Feronia. The reverse shows a kneeling Parthian holding a lost Roman standard that was returned in 20 BC.



Rivalling Rome: Parthian coins and culture is on view in Room 69a from 2 April to 6 September; for details see britishmuseum.org. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis is the co-director of the International Parthian Coin Project, which studies Parthian coins from major international museums.



Reconstruction of the temple sanctuary at Girsu, based on archaeological evidence. Drawing by F. Vardy.

Carved limestone macehead depicting the Thunderbird, 2400 BC. Tello, Iraq,



Limestone statue of Herakles, AD 50. Nineveh, Iraq.



First cities and frontiers

A new touring exhibition reveals the latest discoveries about Iraq's early civilisations. **Gareth Brereton** elaborates

Iraq's rich cultural legacy is of immense importance to our shared understanding of human history. Commonly referred to as 'the cradle of civilisation', the alluvial plains of southern Iraq gave rise to the world's first cities, the first writing system, and some of the earliest empires. A new British Museum touring exhibition *Ancient Iraq: new discoveries* explores Iraq's cultural heritage through 80 remarkable objects, and presents the latest ground-breaking discoveries made during field research conducted as part of the British Museum's Iraq Scheme, directed by Jonathan Tubb, Keeper of the Middle East Department. Star objects highlight the Scheme's two fieldwork projects in Iraq. In the south, Dr Sébastien Rey is directing the excavation of a temple belonging to the world's earliest cities, while in the

north a team led by Dr John MacGinnis has unearthed a massive fort located at the front line of a conflict between two superpowers – the Roman and Parthian empires. Using the latest archaeological field methodologies, the two projects have yielded a wealth of new information about Iraq's ancient past.

The exhibition showcases archaeological research into early cities through work currently underway at the site of Tello in southern Iraq, which has been identified as the ancient Sumerian city of Girsu. By 3000 BC a patchwork of independent city-states had developed across the flood plains of Mesopotamia, each surrounded by an agricultural hinterland. Each city had a temple dedicated to a patron god or goddess, which defined its communal identity and provided the populace with religious and economic services. Girsu is one of the earliest known cities in the world and was revered as the sanctuary of the hero god Ningirsu. Early excavations at Tello led to the discovery of the Sumerians and brought to light some of the most important monuments of Sumerian art and architecture, including the famed statuette of the ruler Gudea and

a monumental bridge built of baked brick, which is the oldest discovered to date.

Current excavations at Tello focus on the sacred district of the ancient city. Satellite images and modern drone surveys have been used to create digital elevation models of the sacred precinct, which has helped to identify the location of Girsu's main temple. Dr Rey's team has now revealed the extensive mud-brick walls of the 4000-year-old temple structure that was dedicated to Ningirsu, considered to be one of the most important sacred places of Mesopotamia and praised for its magnificence in contemporary literary compositions. On display in the exhibition for the first time outside London will be a statue of Gudea, ruler of the ancient state of Lagash, which would originally have been erected within this very temple complex.

Excavations led by Dr MacGinnis at the previously unexplored site of Qalatga Darband have revealed a fortified settlement situated on a mountain pass that controlled a major route of communication between Mesopotamia and Iran. The remains of Qalatga Darband were initially located

using satellite imagery and then mapped using modern surveying techniques. Excavation has been combined with geophysical prospection and the analysis of crop marks recorded through aerial drone surveys to identify ancient buildings. It has confirmed the presence of a large defensive wall that surrounded a fort, in addition to a number of major buildings. The site dates to the early Parthian period (2nd–1st centuries BC) but it may have been founded in the Hellenistic period (c.330–150 BC). At its height the Parthian Empire was Rome's strongest opponent in the east. Parthia was a province of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire (founded by one of Alexander the Great's generals) located in the north of present-day Iran. In the 3rd century BC a nomadic tribe called the Parni challenged Greek rule in Parthia and established an independent kingdom. The Parthians then advanced into Iran and Mesopotamia.

Many of the artefacts found in the monumental building at Qalatga Darband show Greek cultural influence, for example in olive oil presses of an eastern Mediterranean type as well as column capitals and bases in the

Corinthian style. Taken together, these finds demonstrate the impact of Greek cultural traditions, the material imprint of the passage of Alexander the Great as he led his army across the Middle East to the borders of India. This Hellenistic influence at Qalatga Darband does not imply that the site was founded by Alexander or his generals, but it does show how the Parthians adopted elements of Greek culture. On display in the exhibition are Greek-inspired Parthian statuettes, personal ornaments influenced by Greek mythology, gold burial masks and a statue of Herakles dating to the Roman occupation of ancient Nineveh.

The final section of the exhibition addresses the recent destruction of cultural heritage sites in Iraq by Daesh (so-called Islamic State), and the work

of the British Museum in response to it. Developed in 2014, the Iraq Scheme delivers frontline fieldwork to Iraqi archaeologists, helping them to assess, document and stabilise sites that have been damaged or destroyed. The many new discoveries made at both sites in the scheme remain in Iraq and are a heartening reminder of how much there is still to learn about the region's unique cultural legacy.

The British Museum touring exhibition *Ancient Iraq: new discoveries* is on view at The Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle until 2 August and at the University of Nottingham Museum, Lakeside Arts, from 19 September until 13 December.

The Lely Venus, a Hellenistic copy of a Greek original, marble, 2nd century AD. Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019.



Goddess of love

Not unlike the Museum’s *Troy* exhibition, Bettany Hughes’s book can be divided into three rough chronological sections: the origins of Aphrodite/Venus in the archaeological record, her classical heyday, and her evolving roles in more recent societies. Hughes begins in Palaeolithic Cyprus, legendary ‘birthplace’ of the goddess, and from there travels through Babylon and Nineveh, Rome and Pompeii, Alexandria, Florence, eventually to London and the National Gallery’s *Rokeby Venus*. Throughout, the author traces the path of Venus’s development from a representation of a powerful, primal life-force, to the face of the imperial Roman state cult, to a sex object; along the way she pulls in other divine stories which overlap with her titular subject, including Cleopatra, Astarte and the Virgin Mary.

Hughes’s book is a fine introduction not only to the history of this particular goddess but also to the rewarding narratives such studies provide. Students of mythology will

find it absorbing; so will those interested in the aetiology of ideas, the semiotics of divinity and the shapeshifting tenacity of feminine power through the ages. For the more casual reader Hughes offers an alternative perspective on the somewhat two-dimensional portrayals of Venus we have become used to in the 21st century: her name may now evoke disposable razors and pop songs, but Venus still exerts trace influences over many facets of our modern lives, and Hughes takes great delight in revealing these one by one.

Allison Siegenthaler
Administrator, Collection Projects and Resources

Venus and Aphrodite: History of a Goddess by Bettany Hughes, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £12.99.



Trig Lane Group
© Laura Maiklem.

Lost and found

This beautifully written book has justifiably become a bestseller. The author describes in poetic detail her love of the Thames, and her experience as a mudlark, someone who searches for objects on the river foreshore. Starting at the tidal head of the Thames at Teddington in the west, and journeying eastwards through the City to the Estuary, where the river meets the North Sea, she describes each part of the foreshore, weaving the story of the river into the history of London and Londoners.

The ebb and flow of each tide reveals objects from all periods of human activity on the river, from Neolithic flints, through to the everyday objects of the Roman, Saxon, medieval and later periods, up to the modern day. Jewellery, coins, pottery, pins, clay tobacco pipes, dress fittings, leather shoes and other possessions have either been accidentally lost by those who worked or travelled on the river, or deliberately thrown into the water. Rubbish has been dumped into the medieval foreshore revetments behind walls built to reclaim land and form quaysides.

Maiklem describes the river as her secret place of peace, a journey into another world, in the middle of the noisy modern city. The sounds and smells of the river and the dangers of the tides are interspersed with often poignant stories, revealed by the objects, about the people who made, used and lost them. Photos of found objects are posted on Maiklem’s Instagram account, so that they may be viewed while reading the book.

Beverley Nenk
Curator: Britain, Europe and Prehistory

Mudlarking: Lost and Found on the River Thames, by Laura Maiklem, Bloombury Circus, £18.99.

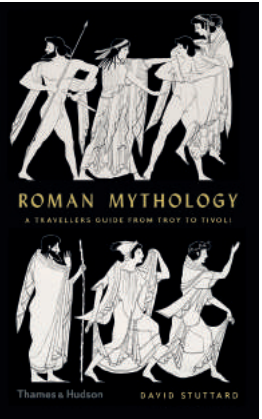
A Roman journey

The subject of classical mythology is of enduring interest and there are many good introductions available, but most of these tend to place the emphasis on the Greek myths. By focusing on Roman (and wider Italian) mythology, this book is able to show the long history of Greek stories in Roman times, their reinterpretation and sometimes appropriation for political ends. All this is done with a light touch and humour that belies the serious scholarship involved.

The unique approach of this excellent book is to take the format of a travel guide and thereby anchor the myths in the locations in which they took place or had ancient relevance. The *Aeneid* forms the backbone of this journey round the Mediterranean region from Troy to Rome by way of Delos, Sicily and Carthage, but the tour also takes in local sanctuaries and semi-mythical historical events as well as contemporary Roman festivals. The welcome inclusion of Etruscan towns gives a broader perspective to Rome’s mythical history.

Each chapter begins with a vignette from the point of view of a modern visitor before exploring the myths of the place and ends with a potted history from prehistory to modern times with key dates and a short description of the main sites that can be visited today. It features charming illustrations by David Bezzina and is thoroughly recommended to the armchair tourist as well as the traveller.

Eleanor Ghey
Curator: Iron Age and Roman Coin Hoards



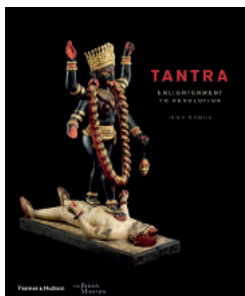
Roman Mythology: A Traveller’s Guide from Troy to Tivoli by David Stuttard, Thames & Hudson, £14.95.

From the British Museum



Arctic: culture and climate
edited by Amber Lincoln, Jago Cooper
and Jan Peter Laurens Loovers,
Thames & Hudson in collaboration
with the British Museum,
£35 hardback
ISBN 978 0 5004 8066 3

Drawing on a wealth of objects, artworks and voices, *Arctic: culture and climate* sheds light on the history of the Circumpolar North and its peoples and, through the lens of climate change and weather, demonstrates how cultural traditions have survived and continue to thrive.



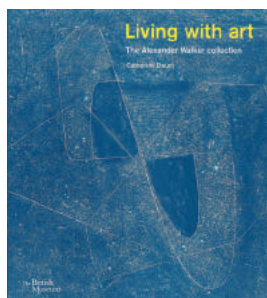
Tantra: enlightenment to revolution
by Imma Ramos,
Thames & Hudson in collaboration
with the British Museum,
£35 hardback
ISBN 978 0 5004 8062 5

Tantra is a radical philosophy that transformed the religious, cultural and political landscape of India and beyond. Presenting sculpture, painting, prints and ritual objects from all over the world, this book offers new insights into Tantra, which continues to capture our imaginations.



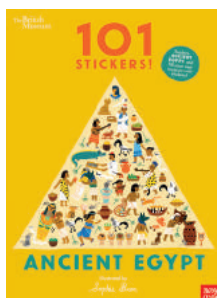
Piranesi drawings: visions of antiquity
by Sarah Vowles,
preface by Hugo Chapman,
Thames & Hudson in collaboration
with the British Museum,
£20 paperback
ISBN 978 0 5004 8061 8

Although best known for his prints of the architecture and antiquities of Rome, it is Giovanni Battista Piranesi's drawings that are the focus of this beautifully illustrated publication. *Piranesi drawings* explores the evolution of the artist's style and interests through the British Museum's outstanding collection.



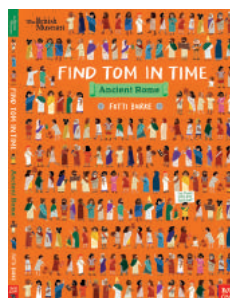
Living with art: The Alexander Walker collection
by Catherine Daunt,
British Museum Press,
£20 paperback
ISBN 978 0 7141 2696 8

A catalogue of the unique collection of modern and contemporary prints and drawings of film critic Alexander Walker (1930–2003), featuring information about 211 works of art dating from 1908 to 2002 by world-renowned artists including Picasso, Matisse, Bridget Riley, Lucian Freud, Chuck Close, Philip Guston and Vija Celmins.



101 Stickers! Ancient Egypt
illustrated by Sophie Beer,
Nosy Crow in collaboration
with the British Museum,
£5.99 paperback
ISBN 978 1 78800 640

This exciting sticker book is a tour around ancient Egypt, with 11 beautifully illustrated scenes and 101 stickers. Young readers can also uncover amazing artefacts on an archaeological dig, and curate their own museum exhibition with real-life photographic objects.



Find Tom in Time: Ancient Rome
illustrated by Fatti Burke,
Nosy Crow in collaboration
with the British Museum,
£12.99 hardback
ISBN 978 1 78800 100 7

The next book in the *Find Tom in Time* series is packed with detailed artwork, fascinating ancient Roman facts and over 100 other things to find – from a sacrificial cow to an escaping gladiator. Young readers are sure to lose themselves in ancient Rome with this brilliantly interactive book.

Ciceroni Travel, the award-winning cultural tour company, offers readers a complimentary place on one of its exhibition-based Study Days on booking their first tour. Tours are paced so that there is always time to look, listen and indeed, learn. Call 01869 811167 quoting BMSD. For all Tours and Study Days, please visit www.ciceroni.co.uk; see p. 10.

Peter Sommer Travels, twice winner of the Tour Operator of the Year Gold Award, is offering a complimentary copy of *Blue Guide Sicily* with every booking in 2020. The most highly regarded guide to the cultural heritage of Sicily in English, it is edited by Dr Michael Metcalfe, one of their core team and tour leaders. Peter Sommer Travels offers expert-led gulet cruises and archaeological tours in Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Turkey and the UK. For a free brochure contact

info@petersommer.com, call 01600 888220 or visit petersommer.com; see p. 21.

The Prince of Egypt is offering readers an exclusive upgrade when they book for Spring performances, with prices from just £29.50. The epic new musical from three-time Academy Award®-winner Stephen Schwartz is an exhilarating, powerful and joyous celebration of belief and the human spirit. Based on the acclaimed DreamWorks Animation film, and featuring the Academy Award®-winning, song *When You Believe*, this 'phenomenal production' (BBC Radio London) recently announced an extension at London's Dominion Theatre. Visit www.theprinceofegyptmusical.com and use code BMUPGRADE to redeem. Ts&Cs apply. Use code BMUPGRADE on the seating plan, or at checkout stage. The offer will be

applied at checkout. Offer valid on Monday–Friday performances between 6 April and 26 June. Upgrade available on price levels as shown below. Monday–Thursday performances between 6 April and 26 June: £75.00 reduced to £45.00, £65.00 reduced to £35.00, £45.00 reduced to £29.50, except 6–17 April, w/c 25 May and all Friday performances where prices are £79.50 reduced to £49.50, £69.50 reduced to £39.50, £49.50 reduced to £29.50. Booking must be made by Sunday 31 May; see p. 4.

Royal Overseas-League, a unique not-for-profit private members' club in the heart of Mayfair, is offering British Museum Members 25% off their joining fee. Members can enjoy clubhouse accommodation, food and drink, a global network of over 100 reciprocal clubs and a diverse portfolio of social

activities which support young artists, musicians and writers. Call +44 (0)20 7408 0214 to book a tour and find out more. Quote 'BMMagazine' when filling out your application to activate your discount; see inside front cover.

Steppes Travel is rewarding those who book ahead for 2021 expert-led group tours. New Spain and Guatemala tours will have no single supplement, while Albania, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Armenia all have two free single supplements, worth up to £635 each. Visit steppestravel.co.uk or speak to an expert on 033300 372 813; see pp. 18–19.

Woman in Guatemalan dress, Did you know the Guatemalans invented the first chocolate bar? Taste their rich history with Steppes Travel's 2021 expert-led group tour.



The Oxborough Dirk,
1500–1300 BC.

Curator's choice

In 1988, a dog walker in the fields around the village of Oxborough in Norfolk literally stumbled upon an ancient sword that had been thrust into the earth – point downwards. As it was pulled upwards through the claggy soil its almost perfect golden bronze blade was revealed for the first time in 3500 years. The finder – and anyone bearing witness to this astonishing scene – would have been forgiven for recalling King Arthur.

The sword, or dirk, weighs a whopping 2.37 kg, is 71 cm long and is completely and undeniably useless. It is too heavy to wield and shows no evidence of having been sharpened or given a handle. The value and beauty of this audacious, ceremonial object lies in its symmetrical lines, curves and chased-in decoration, and in the fact that it was designed, cast and then intentionally ‘sacrificed’. To make an oversized but useless weapon and then purposefully abandon it is not necessarily an act of aggression so much as one of controlled violence – or even pacifism.

The Oxborough sword's significance also lies in its Continental connections. When discovered it was only the fifth known – there were two others from France and another two from the Netherlands. In 2014, a second English example came to light. It had been intentionally bent and folded, thus destroying its perfect symmetry, in an act of carefully executed iconoclasm. All six blades appear to have been made by the same workshop or by the same master metalworker. To a modern sensibility

there is a reassuring symmetry in the paired geographical distribution of these Bronze Age icons, but the world of which they speak was a world before borders.

This was not a time of faceless economic transactions or trade networks; exchange was underpinned by society and by shared ceremonies, aesthetics and symbolic gestures. The copper mine at the Great Orme in Wales had enjoyed a ‘boom’ time, supplying most of Britain with much of its copper. But European sources became increasingly significant in the centuries after 1400 BC and the Oxborough sword is a symbol of this newly forged cross-Channel connectivity.

In 2016, I travelled with the Oxborough sword to Leiden, where the National Museum of Antiquities was staging an exhibition of all the ceremonial swords it could muster, brought back together for the first time since they left the hands and mind of their master bladesmith. But the exhibition had a case left empty for the one sword that had yet to be acquired for public benefit. Thanks to the patient work of our colleagues in the Netherlands, that situation has now been resolved and the sword is now safely in their care. However, the task of reuniting all six blades remains: a fitting – if not quite Arthurian – quest for any European curator ready for the challenge.

Neil Wilkin
Curator: Early Europe

